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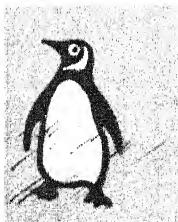
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WITH 24 MAPS

CHINA STRUGGLES FOR CIVILITY

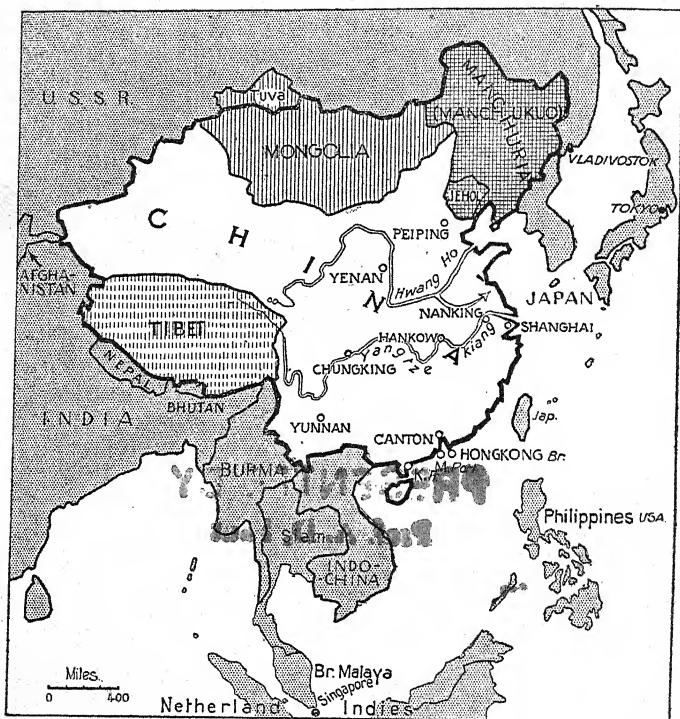


CHINA STRUGGLES FOR UNITY

by J. M. D. PRINGLE

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CHINA AND HER NEIGHBOURS

- Practically independent under Chinese suzerainty.
- Chinese dependency, to day a People's Republic under U.S.S.R.'s influence.
- Chinese dependency under Japanese military occupation.

K = Kwang-chow-wan.

M = Macao

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by
J. M. D. PRINGLE

With 24 maps by
MARTHE RAJCHMAN



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In the year 416 B.C., during the course of the Peloponnesian War, the Athenians, who had then become arrogant with power, demanded that the people of Melos should submit to their Empire on pain of destruction if they refused. In his history of the war Thucydides describes a conference between the Athenian generals and the Melian magistrates in which the following passage occurs:

MELIANS: *You may be sure that we are as well aware of the difficulty of contending against your power and fortune, unless the terms be equal. But we trust that the gods may grant us fortune as good as yours, since we are just men fighting against unjust, and that what we lack in power will be made up by the alliance of the Lacedaemonians, who are bound, if only for very shame, to come to the aid of their kindred. . . .*

ATHENIANS: *When you speak of the favour of the gods, we may as fairly hope for that as yourselves; neither our pretensions nor our conduct being in any way contrary to what men believe of the gods or practise among themselves. Of the gods we believe and of men we know, that by a necessary law of their nature they rule wherever they can. . . . But when we come to your notion about the Lacedaemonians, which leads you to believe that shame will make them help you, here we bless your simplicity but do not envy your folly. The Lacedaemonians, when their own interests or their country's laws are in question, are the worthiest men alive; of their conduct towards others much might be said, but no clearer idea of it could be given than by shortly saying that of all men we know they are most conspicuous in considering what is agreeable honourable, and what is expedient just.*

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INTRODUCTION

THE IMPACT OF THE WEST

SINCE the beginning of the nineteenth century the self-governing states of the Orient have been faced with the choice of adopting Western forms of organisation or of accepting some form of Western dominion; and those which first developed a central government, a strong army, an industrial economy and a national policy had the best chance of remaining independent. Some of these states or countries, like India, were given no time to learn this lesson and fell easily before their Western conquerors. One only, Japan, proved so apt a pupil that she not only maintained her independence but went on to challenge her masters at their own game. China, perhaps, the greatest of them all, is still engaged in this struggle which is not yet lost or won. Her effort to create a modern nation from an ancient civilisation is, indeed, the subject of this book.

If China had had only the Western Powers with which to deal, it is probable that she would already have succeeded. But by a curious chance she has also had to reckon with another Oriental nation,

a neighbour, which in the end has proved her greatest enemy. To the historian, seeking for simple forms where there are none, Japanese aggression must seem almost as an act of historical treachery; and it is, perhaps, a consciousness of this which makes the Japanese claim, as an excuse for their aggression, that they are "saving China from Western domination". For the histories of Japan and China in the nineteenth century offer a remarkable parallel. Both, almost at the same time, were offered that choice between adopting Western forms of organisation or of accepting some forms of Western dominion. What is happening to-day in the Far East is due very largely to the fact that whereas Japan chose the first alternative at once and with enthusiasm, China did so only slowly and with reluctance. The start thus gained in the nineteenth century Japan has used in the twentieth to establish her supremacy in the Far East. For this reason I do not think it is a waste of time to preface this account of China's awakening with a brief outline of the same process in Japan. If it has not other value it may at least serve as a warning of what must be avoided.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Japan was a feudal state in which power was divided among different clans. The central government was in the hands of the Shogun (which just

means General) who was the chief of his own clan, the most powerful of all. The Imperial Dynasty continued, it is true, but almost unnoticed and without power. Under the Shogunate Japan had adopted a policy of self-seclusion unparalleled in the history of the world. For 200 years she had remained in complete and voluntary isolation. Trade was forbidden to all Western peoples except the Dutch who were confined to a little island 200 yards across. Fearful punishments were meted out to any Japanese who adopted an alien creed; death by decapitation was the penalty for any who attempted to leave the islands. In case this should not prove deterrent enough, it was also forbidden to build ships large enough to cross the seas. Foreigners who complained of this exclusion were reminded of the answer given to the Dutch envoy by the Shogun in 1638 that "it is of but slight importance to the Empire of Japan whether foreigners come or do not come to trade". For 200 years Japan forgot and was forgotten by the Western world.

But it is no more possible for a nation than for an individual to escape from the modern world in isolation, and in the 19th century Japan suffered a rude awakening. In 1853 Commodore Perry of the United States Navy entered Uruga Bay with a squadron of four ships. The Japanese, who had not seen such a formidable armada since the days

of the Mongol invasion, fell into a panic which was fully shared by their government. It was all too evident that they could not resist if force were used, and though Commodore Perry sailed away peacefully, promising to return again a year later, their confidence was shaken. The decree against the building of large ships was rescinded, new cannon forged and armies raised from the feudal clans, but these pathetic measures only emphasised the futility of resistance. In 200 years the progress of science in the West had altered the balance of the world. When Commodore Perry returned (this time with ten ships) it was therefore decided to yield to the demands of the United States Government and to sign a treaty granting it special privileges.

The prudence of this decision was proved by bitter experience in the following years. The other Imperialist Powers were not slow to follow the lead of the United States though not always with the same tact. Russia, Holland and Britain soon demanded (and obtained) similar treaties for themselves. Japan was forced to grant further concessions to the United States by a judicious mixture of diplomacy and threats. In 1861 an Englishman was killed and two others wounded in Japan for having violated certain rules of etiquette. They had, perhaps, behaved a trifle rudely (as Englishmen sometimes do abroad) but this did not prevent the

British Government from sending a squadron to bombard the capital of the feudal chief whose men had dared to punish them. At the same time a still more imprudent chief ordered his puny guns to fire upon ships flying the flags of France, Holland and the United States. As a result an international squadron (again largely composed of British ships) shelled his forts, sank his ships and scattered his Samurai.

After a little of this treatment the Japanese, who are an intelligent people, realised that resistance was indeed useless. Putting up with humiliation for the time, they set to work with remarkable energy to copy the methods and imitate the manners of the Western Powers. The Shogunate, completely discredited, crumbled and fell, to be replaced in theory by a restoration of Imperial Power but in fact by the rule of other and more forward-minded clans. This, which is called the Meiji Restoration, was not in any sense a social revolution for the new rulers were careful to preserve the traditional features of Japanese society, but it was to a certain extent a national rising. There can be no doubt of its extraordinary success.

So quickly did the Japanese learn that within a few years she was able to apply the methods of the West to her neighbours of the East. In 1874 she sent an expedition to the island of Formosa (Taiwan), which belonged to the Chinese Empire.



2. JAPAN EXPANDS

In 1894 she fought and utterly defeated the Chinese Empire acquiring Formosa outright in 1895 and establishing the "independence" of Korea (Chosen), though the latter did not become part of the Japanese Empire till 1910. As a result of pressure by Russia, Germany and France, however, she was forced to surrender further concessions she had obtained on the mainland. This rebuff, which deeply shocked Japan, only made her work still harder to achieve military supremacy in the Far East. As a consolation, her precocity was recognised by the British Government which signed the Anglo-Japanese Treaty guaranteeing (not for the last time) the independence and integrity of China which both of them had already violated. This, so to speak, earned Japan her degree in imperialism and she was admitted, if hardly welcomed, into the company of Great Powers. To prove her right to this status, she fought and defeated Tsarist Russia in 1905 in a war that was not entirely of her own choosing, though victory would have been impossible for her without the Treaty with Britain. As a result of this war she acquired Russian rights in Manchuria but was again compelled to disgorge some of them by the other Western Powers. The same thing happened yet again after the war of 1914-18 during which the Japanese fought on the side of the Allies. Having helped to drive the Germans out of the Chinese province of Shantung, Japan naturally expected

to take their place. By the Treaty of Versailles, in fact, Germany ceded her rights in Shantung to Japan, who, however, was pressed to restore them to China at the Washington Conferencé by her Allies who had suddenly and (from the Oriental point of view) rather mysteriously assumed the cloak of virtue. After this third failure Japan realised that it was not enough to be stronger than China, she must also be as strong as the Western Powers. It was not quite the moral which she had been intended to draw.

No one who reads the modern history of Japan, of which this is, of course, but a brief and inadequate summary, can be very surprised at what has happened. It is unfortunate, as Mr. Bertrand Russell has remarked (*The Problem of China*, p. 194) that the Japanese should have "adopted our faults and kept their own" but it is not remarkable. We can only hope that China is not forced to do the same.

For China realisation of the need for change was far harder than for Japan. Her civilisation was ancient and highly developed while that of Japan was more recent and derived largely from her own. For ages she had been the supreme Empire of the Far East while Japan has consciously accepted the position of a lesser state. Shut off from the rest of Asia by the high wall of the Tibetan and Mongolian mountains and from the West

by the interminable seas, she seemed impregnable, a world apart. True, she had been conquered first by the Mongols and then by the Manchus, who had both descended through the northern gap in her mountain walls, but these conquerors had been absorbed and forgotten; and there was no Northern Power left which the artificial barrier of the Great Wall would not keep out. She had not, like Japan, consciously sought isolation. There had been occasional intercourse with the West, mostly of a religious nature, and some trade had reached the ports of the South. But such contacts were permitted rather than sought. China wanted nothing and feared nothing; she was, as no modern nation can be, sufficient unto herself.

In 1793 a British ambassador arrived at the Imperial Court at Peking to request further trade facilities and the establishment of a permanent British diplomatic representative. The reply given by the Emperor Chien Lung to King George III is highly significant of the Chinese attitude to the rest of the world—an attitude which, in spite of its limitations, was by no means absurd. It may also be compared to the reply of the Japanese Shogun to the Dutch envoy already quoted. The Emperor began as follows:

You, O King, live beyond the confines of many seas; nevertheless, impelled by your humble desire to partake

of the benefits of our civilisation, you have dispatched a mission respectfully bearing your memorial. . . . To show your devotion, you have also sent offerings of your country's produce. I have read your memorial: the earnest terms in which it is cast reveal a respectful humility on your part, which is highly praiseworthy.

The Emperor went on to explain politely that he must refuse the request of the British king since he could see no advantage in granting it.

Swaying the wide world, I have but one aim in view, namely to maintain a perfect governance and to fulfil the duties of the State; strange and costly objects do not interest me. I . . . have no use for your country's manufactures. . . .

Our Celestial Empire possesses all things in prolific abundance, and lacks no product within its own borders. There is therefore no need to import the manufactures of outside barbarians in exchange for our own produce.

The Emperor, however, was generous as well as wise. "As the tea, silk and porcelain which the Celestial Empire produces are absolute necessities to European nations and to yourselves," the limited trade permitted at Canton was to continue.

But the West had another argument to which China had no answer: the argument of guns. In her pursuit of wisdom and the arts China had neglected science, and this was to prove her undoing. Though the Tibetan mountains remained (and still remain) an effective barrier by land, the steamship and the gunboat were no longer confined by "many seas". When, in 1840, the British Government

again knocked on China's door demanding the admission of her opium trade, it would not accept rebuff but went to war. As a result China lost the island of Hong Kong and opened five ports to British trade. Other Powers were not slow to follow our example. In 1856 the British and French joined in another war against China and gained access to the Yangtze valley and seven more ports. In 1870 a British diplomat was murdered in China (in those days a fatal mistake) and in recompense the British Government demanded and obtained the opening of another five ports. The French took Annam and the British Burma, both formerly a part of the Chinese Empire. In 1894, Japan, newly graduated in the school of imperialism, went to war with China and (as we have already seen) annexed Formosa and Korea. Later Russia obtained important rights in Manchuria and so the game went on. At the end of the nineteenth century the great Chinese Empire was already in the position of a semi-colonial country.

We have grown so accustomed to this that it is not easy for us to realise the ignominy of China's position. In all her chief cities foreign Powers had (and still have) their "concessions" and "settlements" outside Chinese jurisdiction. It is as if Soho were an Italian concession into which London police could only go on sufferance and within which Italians could do exactly as they liked.

Foreigners who left their concessions still enjoyed complete security (and immunity from the consequences of breaking Chinese laws) by the ingenious system of "extraterritoriality" under which they could be tried only in their own courts. Not only were all the chief ports opened by treaty to the trade of certain Powers but for long the Chinese Government had not even fiscal autonomy. Tariffs were strictly limited by treaty and the bulk of the revenues so derived were pledged to pay off foreign loans. In the five years from 1924-28, for instance, foreign loan and indemnity service absorbed 78 per cent of the net customs revenue, and practically all the rest went to pay internal debts under arrangements made in 1921-22. Since 1928 China has gradually won her fiscal autonomy but the Maritime Customs are still partly in the hands of foreigners. The Inspector-General and other senior officials have since 1854 been foreign officials responsible to the Chinese Government. The British Government, moreover, received an assurance that so long as our trade exceeded that of any other nation the Inspector-General would be British.

The Powers insisted on these measures partly to protect their citizens living in China but chiefly to protect their capital invested there. It is true, of course, that some of these measures (notably the Maritime Customs Service) have worked fairly and, in the long run, to the advantage of China; it is

also true that without foreign capital China's reconstruction would have been impossible. But it should not be forgotten that China had no choice in the matter. She was forced to open her ports to foreign trade; she did not seek foreign trade. Though many Chinese have, of course, benefited, the bulk of the people are no better off and certainly no happier than they were in the reign of the Emperor Chien Lung. And when Western apologists argue that their imperialism was designed, after all, for China's own good, they are measuring by their own standard of what is good. Some of the economic changes brought about by the Western invasion actually increased that poverty which is the permanent lot of China's millions. In the nineteenth century (and for many centuries before) the small farmers of China had been accustomed to supplement their meagre incomes by cottage-industries such as spinning, weaving and paper-making. These products were sold to the landlords who thus returned to the farmers a portion of what they had taken from them in rent. In one sense, indeed, pre-revolutionary China was one of the greatest industrial nations in the world. But with the foreigner came goods imported from abroad and later manufactured in Shanghai, which, even if they could not compete with Chinese products in cheapness, steadily ousted them from the markets by reason of their novelty and superior quality.

This not only increased the poverty of the farmers and therefore aggravated the land problem which, as we shall see in the next chapter, is always the fundamental problem of Chinese politics, but taught millions of uneducated peasants, who did not know or could not understand the other actions of the Western Powers, to resent the coming of the foreigner.

As a result of this foreign pressure for concessions, of territorial acquisitions and of the entry of foreign goods, anti-foreign feeling grew rapidly throughout China. This feeling came to a head with the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, one of the best known and most frequently misrepresented incidents in modern Chinese history. For the Boxer Rebellion was, after all, a protest against aggression. It was the first manifestation of that very nationalist spirit which we now praise when directed against the Japanese. It began as an anti-German movement in the province of Shantung but the Germans had not done anything which other Powers had not done. A proclamation issued by the rebel leader Yu Tung Chen made no invidious distinctions.

These foreigners, under pretext of trading and teaching Christianity, are in reality taking away the land, food and clothing of the people; besides overturning the teaching of the sages, they are poisoning us with opium and ruining us with debauchery. Since the time of Tao Kuang, they seized our territory and cheated us out of our money; they have eaten our children as food and

piled up the public debt as high as the hills; they have burnt our palaces and overthrown our tributary states, occupied Shanghai, devastated Formosa, forcibly opened Kiaochau, and now wish to divide up China like a melon.

Except for the charge that the Westerners had eaten Chinese children this proclamation did no more than state the facts. The rebellion, of course, was a dismal failure. The Powers sent a joint expedition to Peking (which was sacked) exacted a huge indemnity and turned the Legation quarter in Peking into a fortified city. The foreigners were not easily to be dislodged. Besides the advantage given to them by their gunboats and magazine rifles they held strategic points from which they could dominate the whole of China.

The more intelligent and educated Chinese learnt from these events that only a profound change—a revolution, if you will—could save China from complete subservience. They realised that their government was no longer fitted for dealing with the modern world. The impact of Western ideas had unsettled many of them who had come in contact with foreigners at the Treaty Ports; and though one may doubt whether many of these ideas were really better than those accepted for so long by the Chinese, they helped to undermine confidence in Chinese society and Chinese civilisation. It is true that the Manchu Dynasty had already been greatly weakened by the Taiping Rebellion (1849–64), that

it had become corrupt and inefficient in many ways, and that it had failed to deal successfully with China's internal problems; but it was the contrast between its futility and the aggressive energy of the Western Powers which finally destroyed its influence. Just as the impact of the West had withered the Shogunate in Japan, so in China it proved the death of the Manchu Dynasty. It is often said that the first revolution of 1911, which ended imperial rule in China, had a threefold character of an uprising against the Manchu Dynasty, a movement for reform of the political and administrative systems on Western models and a revolt against the foreign economic penetration of China, but it is not difficult to see that these three objects were really one and the same. This is not to say that the Revolution was a simple movement; on the contrary it was carried through by men of very different aims. But it was essentially a national movement and it was this which gave it, for a little, the necessary strength and unity. It is true, however, that of those three aims only one, the end of the Manchu Dynasty, was achieved by the first revolution of 1911. If the ancient and historic Chinese Empire died in that year the Chinese nation was not born until the second revolution of 1926-7. Its struggle for full independence (for manhood, if one cares to continue the metaphor) is still going on to-day. After 27 years, indeed, China may at first sight seem further

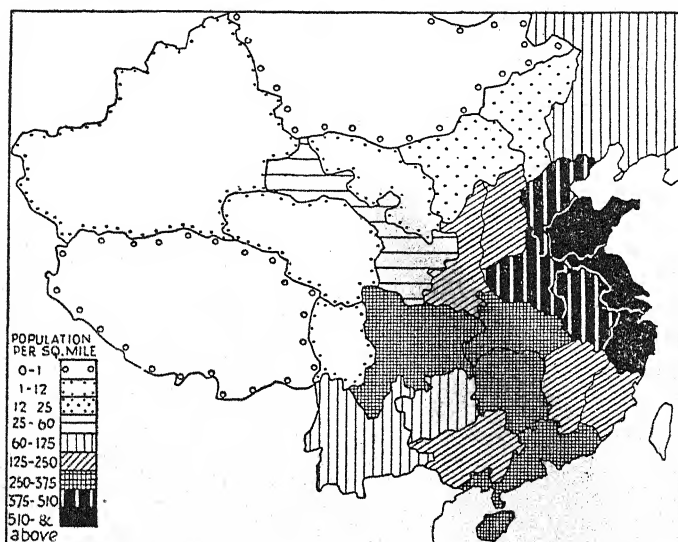
from her goal than ever with Peking, the old capital, and Nanking, the new, both in the hands of an invader; but this, I think, is not true. As so often war has come to strengthen revolution, and the last sixteen months have done more to weld China into a nation than all the efforts of the Kuomintang.

CHAPTER I

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

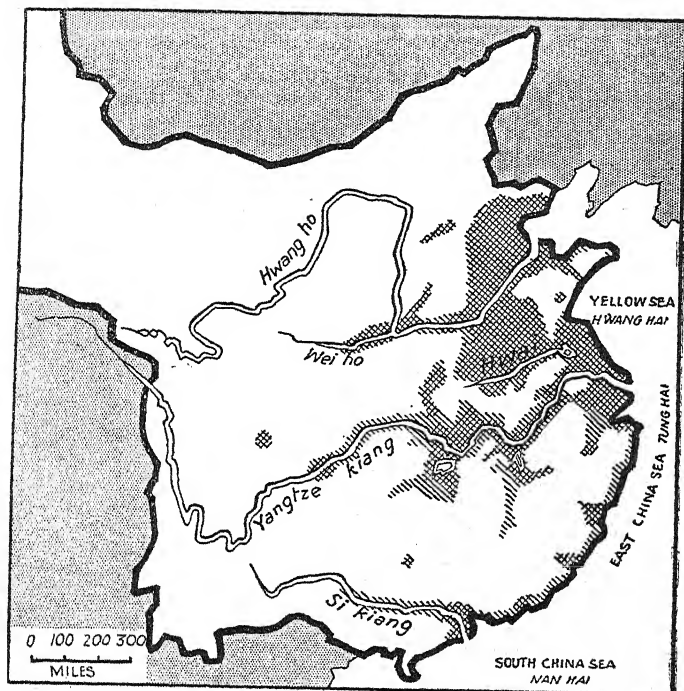
No one knows for certain how many people live in China for the good reason that no one has ever counted those who do. Different estimates vary by millions but we may accept as the best that made by the Directorate of Statistics in Nanking in 1931. According to this estimate there are 452,791,069 people in China including Jehol and Manchuria, both now under Japanese rule, and about 420 millions without. It is generally assumed that this number is rapidly increasing but, again, no one knows how fast or even whether it is increasing at all. It is, however, by any standards a vast population; and if those Chinese living abroad are added to the number, it is calculated that out of every five persons in the world, one is Chinese.

Of the 420 millions who still live under Chinese rule about 78 or 80 per cent earn their living directly or indirectly from the land. That China is an agricultural nation is a platitude but it is an important one: the cause of nearly all China's troubles is that there has never yet been sufficient land for the people. It is wiser to say "yet" because it does not



3. DENSITY OF POPULATION

necessarily follow that China is overpopulated. It is possible that more scientific farming and a more equable social system might find room for many more millions than at present. This view, indeed, is held by many good authorities. But for practical purposes it is safe to say that China is grossly overcrowded. The population is densest in the great plains of North China, the coastal provinces of the South, and the river valleys of the Hwang-ho, the Yangtze-kiang and the Si-kiang. This, of course, is no accident. The rest of China tends to be arid and mountainous, and the Chinese peasant, though a clever if rather conservative farmer and an industrious worker, cannot colonise these areas without expensive schemes of irrigation and Government aid. Unfortunately Chinese Governments have rarely had the time, the power and the money to carry out such schemes even if they have had the wish, so the bulk of China's population remains concentrated in comparatively small and fertile areas where it suffers from chronic overcrowding. Formerly immigration into Manchuria, Mongolia, and overseas provided some relief for this pressure. On another map may be seen the numbers of Chinese now living in different parts of the world and especially in the South Seas and also the main movements of migration in the years from 1920 to 1929. These Chinese living abroad, moreover, sent (and to a lesser extent still send) large sums of



CHINA : PLAINS



Level land



up to 500 feet

4. The rest of China is either : mountains, hills, or high plateau.

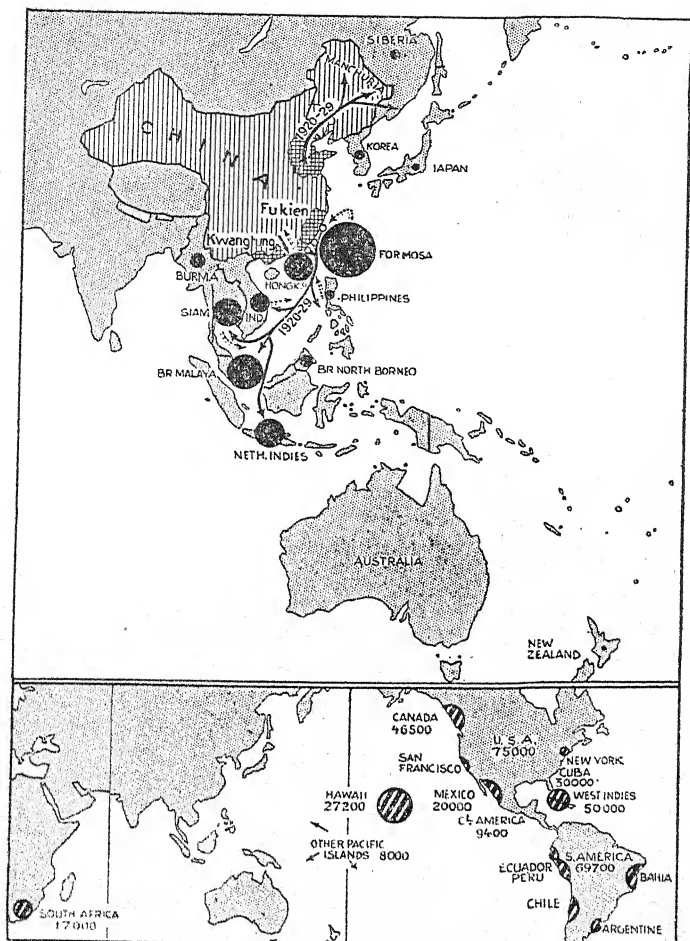
THE CHINESE OVERSEAS

No exact figure is available of Chinese living abroad. Estimates vary between 7,000,000 and 11,000,000. Of these a very high percentage is located in Far Eastern countries. The following table, based where possible on official statistics and elsewhere upon estimates in the standard reference books, shows the approximate number of Chinese in each of these countries.

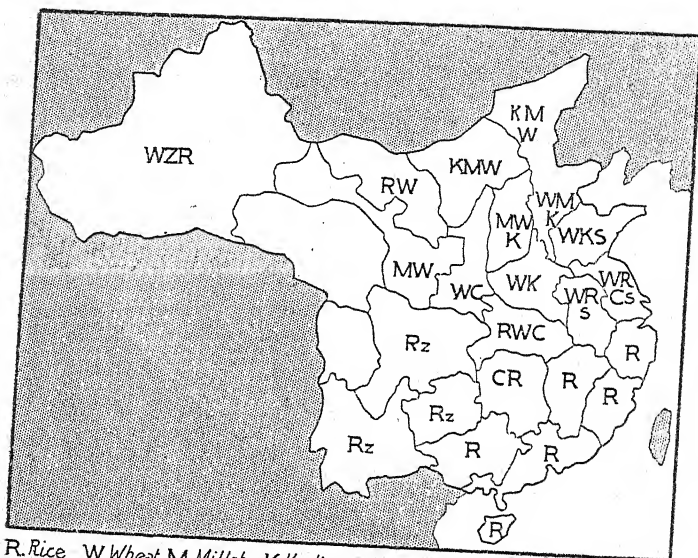
Hong Kong	1,057,500
French Indo-China	418,000
Formosa	4,399,000
(Of these about four million have become Japanese subjects)	
Korea	91,400
Siam	1,100,000
British Malaya	1,709,400
Netherlands East Indies	1,232,000
Japan Proper	23,900
Australia	13,100
New Zealand	2,100
Philippines	70,000
Siberia	77,200

The black arrows on the map show the main movements of migration in the years 1920 to 1929. The principal areas from which emigrants were drawn were Fukien and Kwangtung in the South, Hopei and Shantung in the North. Since 1931—as the result of the world depression—the movement of Chinese back to the Southern Provinces has been greater than the movement outwards; and this trend is shown on the map by small dotted arrows.

In the sixteen years from 1914 to 1930 the Chinese abroad remitted very large sums of money to China. This became a most important item in the balance of payments—enabling China to develop a large visible adverse balance; the volume of these remittances has been variously estimated, and it is now fairly generally agreed that the average annual figure must have been considerably in excess of Chinese \$200 million, the estimate made in Professor Remer's book *Foreign Investments in China*. With the decline in prosperity of Chinese emigrants during the world depression these remittances fell drastically, and this was no small factor in the monetary crisis in China in 1935.



No. 5.



R. Rice W. Wheat M. Millet K. Kaoliang S. Soy Bean Z. Maize C. Cotton

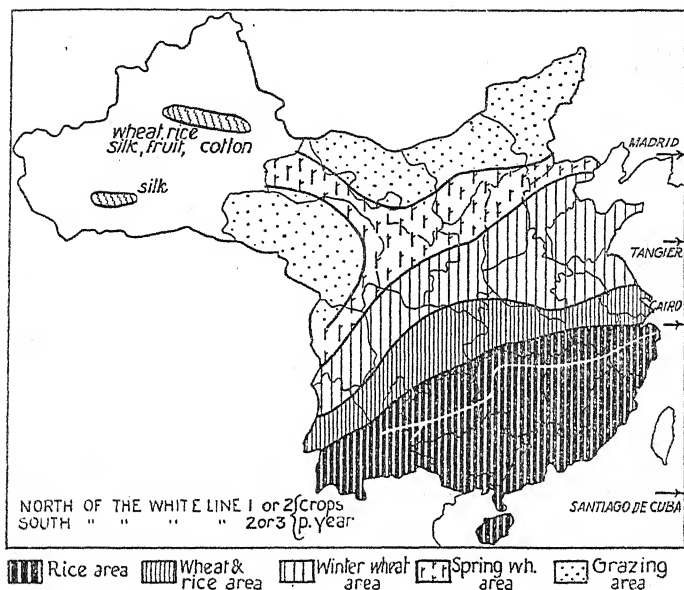
6. MAIN AGRICULTURAL AREAS (1)

The principal crops of each province are indicated in order of importance and based upon crop acreage.

China is the first producer of rice in the world (480,396,000 quintals in 1935-1936).

China is the second producer (after U.S.S.R.) of wheat in the world (213,000,000 quintals in 1935-1936).

She imports both rice and wheat.



7. MAIN AGRICULTURAL AREAS (2)

money back to China which helped to relieve the poverty of their families and formed an important item in the balance of exchange. But in recent years the world-wide depression, the exclusive policies of other States, Japanese aggression in the north and other factors have gradually closed these outlets and the pressure of population in China and the poverty of the masses has thereby increased.

As the population in the fertile areas expands, the size of individual farms becomes smaller. In the plains of North China the average size of farms is about five acres. This may not seem very small but it should be remembered that the crops in these areas are largely wheat and kaoliang which do not give a high yield per acre. In the richer land of the Yangtze valley, where rice is the main crop, the average size of farms is hardly more than one English acre and in the coastal provinces of the South scarcely half an acre. The average for the whole of China is calculated at 3.6 acres. But there is a limit to the amount of land which will support even a Chinese peasant and his family, and, as the pressure of population increases, other evils follow. Independent farmers go bankrupt and the number of tenant farmers increases. Rents rise while the standard of living falls steadily. Eventually part of the population, if it cannot emigrate, is driven to revolt against the landlords or to seek a more profitable livelihood in banditry. Since there is no

dole for the unemployed, banditry often forms the only alternative to starvation; and just as capitalist governments in Europe allow for so many unemployed, so local authorities on China allow for so many bandits. Until recently, however, there was this difference: while in capitalist countries unemployment offered no hope of anything better, banditry in China gave an ambitious young man a chance to rise in the world by becoming a leader and eventually, perhaps, a warlord in his own right.

This is the place to consider briefly the social structure of China. So far I have written of China and the Chinese as though these abstractions had a definite meaning and, to a certain extent, this practice is inevitable. But it is important to remember that China, like all other nations, is divided into sections and classes whose interests are rarely identical. By China one may mean the Government or the people; by Chinese one may refer to the ruling classes at any particular moment or to the peasant masses who have never yet ruled. If we wish to understand modern China and the revolutions of 1911 and 1927 it is first necessary to distinguish the main groups and parties within them.

In China this analysis is comparatively simple, for there are really but two classes which matter: ~~the gentry and the peasant farmers~~. An important industrial bourgeoisie has grown up in the big

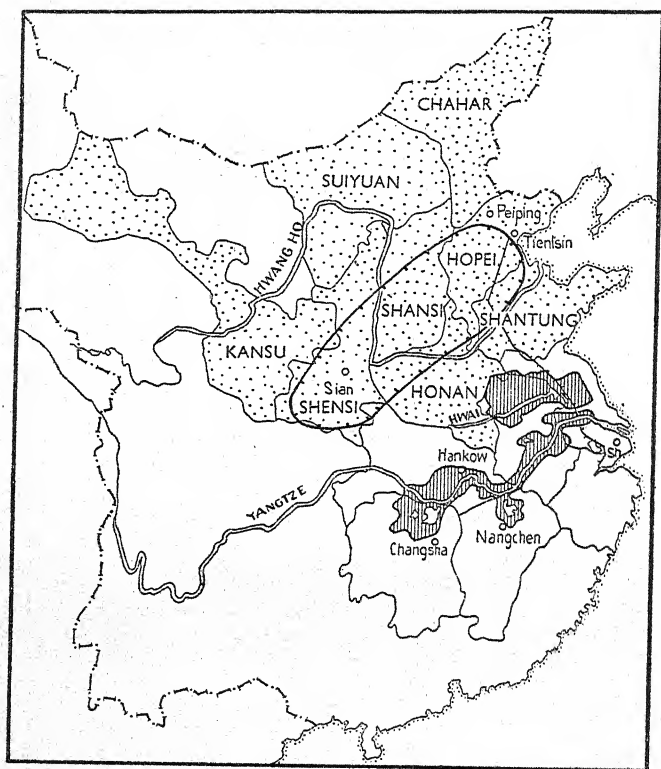
cities but these "capitalist" Chinese are for the most part related to the landed gentry of the country and frequently still own estates of their own. There is also of necessity a large population of industrial workers but these are mostly peasants at one remove who have sought work in the towns rather than starve in the country. Both of these classes are small when compared to the landed gentry and the vast mass of peasant farmers.

At the top, therefore, we find the landed gentry, at once the upper and middle class of China. By tradition they are a kindly and moderate class, neither overbearing to their inferiors nor unduly jealous of their privilege. Conservative, intelligent, a trifle lazy, they have produced the artists and writers of China whom we know and admire. They have the faults and virtues of a cultured upper class in any country. These landlords are not, by Western standards, wealthy; except in certain provinces there are no estates to compare with the great possessions of the Prussian Junkers or Spanish nobility. Any Chinese owning 300 acres of land would be considered well-to-do, but the fact that they are not rich by Western standards is little comfort to the peasants who support them.

At the bottom are the peasant masses, the real people of China. Some of these small farmers own, and all of them want to own, their own land; others work as tenants of the landlords. It is

difficult to say what is the proportion of ownership and tenantry for there are great differences in this respect in different provinces. In the North the proportion of ownership is put as high as 75 per cent; in the southern provinces it may fall as low as 30 per cent. But whether the Chinese peasant owns his land or tills the landlord's estate, he is for the most part miserably poor. He carries on his back many burdens besides those of excessive labour. He is exploited and robbed at every turn. By the payment of rent he supports an educated upper class which gives him little in return; by the payment of land tax he supports government and army. Only when the pressure of population becomes intolerable does he revolt, joining some warlord's army or upsetting a dynasty. For the rest he patiently endures.

There are, however, other factors to be considered: the Malthusian checks of war, famine and pestilence. China has always been peculiarly liable to such disasters which occur on such a scale that we find it difficult to comprehend them at all. On the next page another map shows the areas stricken by flood and famine only since 1920; they are just the areas in which the population is most dense. Millions are drowned or starved or die through disease. Wars also play their part. In the nineteenth century, for instance, occurred the Taiping Rebellion which was itself caused partly



FAMINES

○ North China Famine 1920-21

■ The drought of 1928-29

▨ The Yangtze flood of 1931-32

by the pressure of population. It took the Manchu Emperors 16 years to suppress it and it is reckoned that in that time more people were killed than in the whole of the Great War of 1914-18.

The Manchu Dynasty never recovered from the strain. Great areas of Central China fell into decay. Yet, terrible as are these catastrophes, there can be no doubt that they bring a measure of relief. When the wars are over and the flood waters go down, there are fewer people among whom to divide the land and the size of farms increases—for a little. Perhaps some of the landlords have been killed and long-standing debts go unpaid or forgotten. So periods of distress and unrest in China are sometimes followed by periods of peace and stability. It is even possible that when the terrible struggle against Japan is over, the task of reconstruction will be found easier by whosoever attempts it just because of the millions who have perished.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the pressure of population had once again filled the gaps left by the Taiping Rebellion and other civil wars. Once again the peasants were restless and discontented. This unrest, caused by the land shortage, had nothing to do with the impact of the West; it was, as we have seen, a periodic disease which troubled China and which, in times past, had led merely to a change of dynasty, a civil war or a rebellion ill directed and without an end. This time,

however, other factors entered to give it form and meaning. The poverty of the small farmers had been increased by the competition of imported goods which ousted their home-made products from the markets. The gentry had become more grasping (partly because they wished to buy the Western luxuries) and less respectful of tradition. The landlords, who had not often owned more than 200 or 300 acres of land, began to acquire more and more. They demanded higher rents from their tenants, who in 1910, the year before the revolution, were often paying one-half of their crops in rent. When the Manchu Dynasty finally fell in 1911 the situation was aggravated by the decay of government. Provinces fell into the hands of small cliques of the gentry or of ambitious warlords who exacted a heavy tribute from the struggling farmers. As the old civilisation crumbled, its virtues—kindliness tolerance, moderation—faded and its vices—corruption, greed and inefficiency—became more, prominent.

Political unity under the Manchu Dynasty was maintained by a bureaucracy whose rule was based on century-old tradition and experience. Although it was not easy for many years to overcome the this inertia, the decision passed into the hands of military commanders who proclaimed a puppet Republic with a dummy parliament partly composed of Western-trained bourgeois politicians who

proved on the whole inefficient and venal. Since real power rested on the Army, which with the exception of a very small central force was composed of territorial levies of the various Provinces, the strongest Provincial War-lord would eventually capture Peking and, with it, the old Imperial Seal of Office. The two strongest—Yuan Shih-kai and Chang Tso-lin—succeeded in maintaining their rule over almost the entire area of the Empire by the weight of their prestige, not unlike that of General Dictators in post-war Europe and Asia Minor. Successful in maintaining such unity, both died at the hands of a foreign assassin; ruling in a period of popular upheavals all over the world, they upheld their power by reactionary methods, both enjoying the support of the Great Powers but becoming for “Young China” the synonym of hated reactionary militarism. This “Young China” represented the movement of emancipation, from the mediaeval Manchu Empire, from the military usurpers, and from the tyranny of the old family and caste system and the fetters of a decaying civilisation, as well as from the injustices of the Treaties imposed on China by foreign powers. This movement of emancipation was led by revolutionary parties formed all the more easily by reason of the Secret Societies which abounded in China, particularly South of the Yangtze Valley, from time immemorial. These were a kind of

Chinese Masonic Lodges grouping, for example, Cantonese or Hunnanese resident in Nanking, or associations prosecuting political or sectarian aims under an Imperial régime which left no outlet for self-government.

After several frustrated attempts at revolt, a single Revolutionary Party emerged, under the leadership of a brilliant Doctor, Sun Yat-sen, who had studied in England; by faith a Christian, by conviction a Socialist of the reformist type, he was a practical philosopher who knew how to express in terms adapted to his people's mentality—at once vague and appealing—the aims taking shape at the beginning of the twentieth century for the political reform and social uplift of the masses. He founded a Party of the People (in Chinese, "Kuomintang") which was intended to stand for social emancipation of the masses as well as their political emancipation from the reactionary militarists and the disabilities imposed by foreign treaties. The Party demanded economic development with the help of foreign capital under the control of a Central Chinese Government; full political independence, from foreign control based on a People's Army responsible to the Central Government, politically conscious and in its turn freed from illiteracy.

The strength of this Young China movement in its modern form was soon evident. Sun Yat-sen

was proclaimed President of the Republic of China, but obviously could not govern with and through the corrupt reactionary Generals in Peking. This led to the establishment of the Headquarters of his Movement in the sheltered South-West—the Cantonese by their intelligence and dogged persistence having been nicknamed the “Scots” of China.

The association of the Western Powers with Soviet Russia during the Great War caused Sun Yat-sen to doubt their sincerity of purpose and to welcome gladly the Russian Revolution of 1917. In the halcyon days of their political emancipation the Russians proclaimed the right of self-determination of Finland and Poland, and renounced the privileges held by Imperial Russia in China—thus securing the confidence of the Kuomintang.

Sun Yat-sen accordingly invited technical advisers from Russia, who gave the Kuomintang lessons in organising into labour unions the river-front and industrial workers, providing them with slogans, revealing the misery of the Chinese peasant, instructing their People's Army in methods of modern and revolutionary warfare, putting their finances in order, and, above all, making them conscious of their innate strength. While the Great Powers continued to support and obtain advantages from the Militarists in the North, the Canton Government, emboldened by its new

consciousness, challenged the privileges enjoyed by the Colony at Hong Kong and after a memorable period of boycott and strike, won its case, crowned by amicable settlement.

The Government of the Kuomintang Party was now ready for the conquest of their own country from the hands of their own militarists. The Army, led by a young Commander of the Military Academy of Canton, and one of the ablest lieutenants of Sun Yat-sen—by name, Chiang Kai-shek—was advised by a Russian expert (no less a person than Marshal Bluecher, until recently Commander-in-Chief of the formidable Soviet Far Eastern Army). The troops advancing from Canton on Hankow, with no railway then in existence, were preceded by propagandists who, with the slogans now adopted by Kuomintang, aroused the peasantry against those who oppressed them most—the money-lenders, the unscrupulous landlords who exacted sometimes more than half their crops in land-tax, the local registrars who unjustly assessed their taxes, and the militarists who took their sons for their personal Armies as cannon-fodder. Opposition melted, and at Hankow a new Central Government was established with an active Russian adviser by the name of Borodin to inspire a new machinery of penetration. By that time Sun Yat-sen had died, and the central authority of State was now in the hands of the political organs of the Kuomintang. It was a

composite party, for which the meaning of the Chinese Revolution had various interpretations. Most of the Western-trained sons of the landed gentry and their followers were chiefly interested in creating a modern State.

They wanted first an efficient government, which would put an end to civil strife, and an efficient army, which would put an end to foreign domination. So far as internal politics were concerned they wished vaguely to imitate the Western States which they admired and hated; they foresaw a moderate democratic and liberal constitution on the American model. But for this they were content to wait. They were sympathetic to socialism and in favour of some immediate reforms but they certainly did not want any drastic change such as a revolutionary programme of land reform. This was hardly surprising for the great majority were the sons of landlords and depended for their income on land rentals.

But there was another section of the intelligentsia with very different ideas. Though also mainly the sons of the gentry they were more attracted by the new doctrines of Communism. Some had read Marx and Lenin; more still were won over by the actual inspiration of the Russian Revolution; others, no doubt, were attracted just because Communism represented so clean a break with Chinese tradition. This Left wing, though even more anti-

imperialist and certainly no less anxious to build up a modern and independent state, put internal reform in the forefront of its programme. They were especially interested in the conditions of the peasant masses (in which they showed political discernment) and went about in the country districts organising and teaching the farmers. The Right wing, on the other hand, was more interested in the towns and was not a little impressed by the advantages of industrial capitalism.

Sun Yat-sen did not live to see the split in the Kuomintang ranks. He himself believed in democracy for China, which he considered could only become fully operative in three stages:—

(1) The ousting of reactionary militarists from power by force with emergency rule by the People's Army,—to last until the power of the Warlords had been extinguished.

(2) A period of political tutelage under the Kuomintang while the masses would be trained in self-government, and finally

(3) The introduction of popular constitutional government. (In practice it never got further than the first stage, namely, military rule).

But Sun Yat-sen did not live to see either the Kuomintang in power in China, or the final split between Left and Right which came the year after his death. All the evidence suggests that, if he had lived, he would have chosen the Left and that

this is how his policy was in fact interpreted by his wife, the brilliant and beautiful Soong Ching-ling, when at last the split came.

As events turned out neither the Right wing nor the Left wing of the intelligentsia had the final say.

To achieve power the Kuomintang required an army and, as so often happens, the army which began as the servant of the revolution ended as its master. The army was necessarily more widely recruited than the party and had less interest in first principles. On the whole the officers tended to support the policy of the Right wing, partly because, as sons of the gentry themselves, they had no liking for land reform, partly because they naturally wished first to create a strong government and a strong army.

The Kuomintang Left Wing was composed of Communists who up to 1924 constituted a separate, small, but active group who had joined the People's Party when Sun Yat-sen called in Russian advisers, in the belief that the Chinese Revolution could not result in social transformation until the rule of the reactionary militarists was subservient to the movement and until Young China was in full power and liberated from foreign control. When a military victory was practically achieved with the establishment of an All-Party Government in Hankow, the Left wing desired to consolidate the revolutionary

gains and organise in depth the territories south of the Yangtze, even before proceeding to reoccupy Northern China. Chiang Kai-shek, with the Centre and the Right, was, however, anxious above all to establish the political unity of the whole country and felt that the Russians were no longer needed. In this policy he was supported by Western interests in China and in Europe. London, Washington and Paris were preparing to recognise in Chiang Kai-shek another Kemal Ataturk, but were determined to prevent him from becoming a second Trotsky or Lenin.

Acute trouble arose between the Central Government in Hankow and the Commander-in-Chief, and was fanned into violent conflict. The majority of the Army supported Chiang Kai-shek, who proclaimed a Provisional Government in Nanking and forced the Hankow administration, now deserted by its Central and Right wing leaders and waverers, into the adjoining Province of Kiangsi, where it established itself, with such troops as remained loyal to it, as a Government challenging the legitimacy of Nanking. General Chiang Kai-shek's administration received the support of the majority of the Party and for the next ten years he was engaged in an attempt to suppress what had now become the "Red Armies" of China but which he did not acknowledge to be Communists until 1936, previously declaring them to be military rebels.

So the Kuomintang Revolution, which began as a popular and radical movement towards liberty, equality and democracy, ended, as revolutions often do, as a military dictatorship. After 1926 General Chiang was still dependent on the bourgeois of the cities and the country gentry but it was the army which held the balance and which called the tune. The army itself, which by 1936 had an establishment of some million and a half men, was not a homogeneous unit. It was partly national and supported by the revenues of the Central Government but mainly provincial, depending on provincial revenues and owing varying degrees of allegiance to Nanking. Its core was the highly trained divisions of General Chiang himself, which in the last resort controlled the country for no other force could stand against them. The officers of this army stood for law, order and national strength. They were genuinely patriotic; they were anxious to reform abuses; they were proud of the development of their country. In some ways they were even liberal. But they were not, like the bourgeois intelligentsia, interested in liberty or democracy let alone Communism as such. If they thought of such things at all, they favoured the doctrines of Fascism or National-Socialism. Indeed the Second Revolution of 1926-7 which established General Chiang and the Nanking Government in power might be compared to the Nazi revolution in Germany. Both were middle-

class revolutions; both found their inspiration in the will to free their country from foreign domination by military strength; and both ended in a personal dictatorship. But, unlike Hitler, General Chiang's power was not based on a political party but on the army. If the Kuomintang continued to give its support it was because it had no choice in the matter and no alternative except the radical revolution which it had already rejected.

CHAPTER II

THE COMMUNISTS

THE industrial workers of Shanghai, whose general strike had made easy General Chiang's conquest of that city, and the peasants of the Yangtze valley, who had aided his march to the North, were not represented in the Government which was established at Nanking by the second revolution of 1926-7. They had, indeed, no more say in the administration than they had had under the government of the Manchu Emperors or the Warlords who had followed them. The Communist Party alone had championed their interests and the Communists were now expelled from the Kuomintang, proscribed and terrorised. But the Communists did not submit without a struggle. Their able leader in Shanghai, Chou En-lai, fled up the Yangtze to Nanchang, capital of the Kiangsi province, where he organised the August First Uprising, the historical beginning of the "Red Army." Then he went to Swatow where Communist workers seized this Treaty Port on the South Coast and held it for ten days against foreign gunboats and the army of the militarists. Then, when Swatow fell, he went to Canton where he

organised the famous Canton Commune. These were brave but forlorn adventures and soon the Communists were driven from the towns into the provinces of Kiangsi and Fukien where, under Chou En-lai and another leader Chu Teh, they organised the first Soviet Republic in China, a small state within the State. There for six years they remained, building up the famous Red Army, working out their own methods of warfare against the troops of the Nanking Government and making their first experiments in social reform which have been of such profound significance for the new China.

In writing about the Chinese Communists and the Red Army one is faced with many difficulties. Most reports of their activities have naturally been coloured by the prejudices of the Nanking Government and foreigners (mostly "bourgeois" foreigners) living in China. No impartial observer visited the Soviet areas in Kiangsi while the Communists were there and for that period one must judge almost entirely by what was found when they had left. Since their famous Long March to the North-west and, still more, since the beginning of the war against Japan when they became "respectable", more reliable information has been available, but most of it is derived from one brilliant book, Mr. Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China*, which he wrote after spending several months with the Communists

in Shansi and Shensi in 1936. One is so dependent on this book that it is impossible to acknowledge everything derived from it; enough to say that it is indispensable to anyone who wishes to understand the Communist movement in China.

For some time after 1927 the Communists in Kiangsi were left to their own devices by the Nanking Government which had its hands full dealing with the remaining warlords. During this period their agitators and propagandists travelled through the countryside teaching the farmers their aims and policy. There were military garrisons in the province but the Communists were left unmolested so long as they kept to the hills. In 1930, when the Nanking Government became involved in the last of its wars against the Northern warlords, even these garrisons were reduced or withdrawn; and the Communists, taking advantage of this opportunity, came down from the hills and occupied a large part of the province. The farmers and peasants of Kiangsi, who had suffered from every imaginable hardship in previous years, rather welcomed than opposed their coming, and here the Communists stayed, establishing a formidable and compact state, until driven out by the Nanking Government's troops in 1934.

In these four years the Red Army increased from about 30,000 men to nearly 120,000 regular troops, recruited partly from the local peasantry and partly

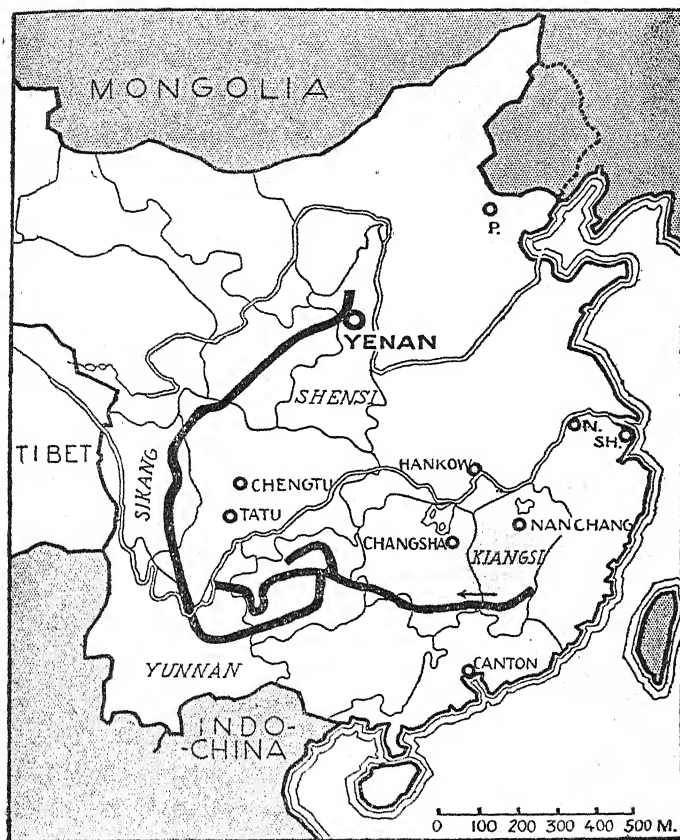
from deserters from the Government forces sent to fight them. This, indeed, was a constant feature of the campaigns against the Communists, and in one year, 1932, no fewer than 10,000 national troops deserted in a body taking with them their full equipment. During most of this period the Kiangsi Soviet maintained communication with the outside world through the ports of Swatow and Amoy in Fukien, where the 19th Route Army, which was supposed to bar this road to the sea, was careful not to take its duties too seriously. In spite of this the Red Army had no heavy arms as it could not afford to buy them. They relied only on machine guns and rifles captured from the national forces or brought over by deserters whom the Communists called their "ammunition carriers." Their success against the Government armies was due to a number of factors but chiefly to the brilliant guerilla tactics which they developed. In this warfare they had many advantages. They knew the country perfectly. Having no equipment to speak of, they could move rapidly and were not dependent on roads and railways. Since the great majority of the peasants supported them they enjoyed a highly efficient intelligence service whereas the Government troops could never rely on the inhabitants not to betray their presence. Not the least important was the fact that the Communists were fighting for a cause in which they believed while the nationalist troops

were at best indifferent and frequently sympathetic to their opponents. It was the first occasion on which it was demonstrated to the world that, given good leaders and a good cause, Chinese soldiers were a match for any others.

It is more difficult to say whether the Red Army actually devised anything new in guerilla tactics. The subject is dealt with very fully in Mr. Edgar Snow's book and it would be a waste of time to discuss it here. Mr. Snow himself believes that their chief contribution to the art of war is the skill with which they combine their forces to make an ~~attack~~ on any particular point and then immediately disperse so that effective retaliation is impossible. But it is, perhaps, worth mentioning that elsewhere guerilla warfare has been carried out most successfully in wild country with few inhabitants such as in the mountains of the Riff or in the Hedjaz desert. In China, however, the Red Army frequently operated in densely populated farm country and it was its close contact with the local population which made it so formidable. Not only did this solve all problems of supply and intelligence but at any moment the Red Force was likely to be doubled or trebled by local volunteers who had been rapidly trained and armed. It was this, too, which earned it the name of "partisan warfare." But the most vivid phrase to describe that warfare is that used by the Communists themselves who say:

"We are the fish and the people are the water through which we move."

Eventually, however, the troops of the Central Government found measures to counterbalance these advantages. The most successful were the concrete blockhouses (suggested by General Chiang's German military advisers) by means of which they could command the country and which the Communists could not take since they had no artillery. The aeroplane also proved an effective weapon though less so, perhaps, than might have been expected. Like the tribesmen on the North-west frontier of India the Communists soon learnt to scatter on the hill sides and lie still. It should also be remembered that the Red Army was not the only one to profit by experience. There is little doubt that General Chiang regarded this civil warfare as excellent training for his new army, and when at last the Central Government was able to concentrate a large force against the Communists in Kiangsi in 1934, the Red Army was soon in difficulties. It was not, however, outmanœuvred. Realising that to stay was to risk annihilation, the Communist leaders gave the order to leave and on October 16, 1934, the Great March began. This long trek of the Communist armies across China has very rightly become an epic. Moving first south and west then wheeling north across the Yangtze gorges, twisting and dodging the Nationalist troops which pursued



9. THE LONG MARCH

(after Edgar Snow)

This map shows only the main direction of the Red Army's Long March.

them, the Communists escaped from the trap. In a little over a year they travelled 6,000 miles, fighting all the way, crossing mighty rivers and mountain ranges. I will not give the exact figures of this march which Mr. Snow gives for though I believe them to be true I do not expect that anyone else will. But this much is certain: in October, 1934, the Red Army was surrounded by General Chiang's troops in Kiangsi; in November, 1935, it had emerged far to the North-west in the provinces of Shansi and Shensi, where, with unabated energy, the Communists set to work to build a new Soviet State like the one which had been destroyed. As a story of heroism and endurance this march must rank with the march of Xenophon's ten thousand, with Alexander's historic raid into Asia or with any other of those military feats with which we of the West buttress our confidence in our own superiority.

The military skill of the Red Army has now been put to the service of the nation in the war against Japan. But, in the long run, it is not their military but political skill which has counted most. The Communists gained control of Kiangsi by exploiting the discontent of the peasants with the old system of land tenure and the extravagant rents demanded by the landlords. But, unlike most political parties, they did not hesitate to fulfil their promises when able to do so. First, all titles to land in Kiangsi

were cancelled and the land was divided. Each family was given a holding according to its size, though the size naturally depended on the quality of the land. Those landlords who had not fled were "liquidated"; rents were abolished outright. At first the farmers were not even asked to pay taxes since the Soviet Government (and it was a Soviet Government) had sufficient funds in the money confiscated from the gentry. Later farmers had to pay between 5 and 15 per cent of their rice crop which was, however, very much less than they had formerly paid in rent alone. There was also a certain amount of discrimination against "rich" farmers (the Russians would have called them "Kulaks") in favour of "poor" farmers. A certain proportion of land in each district was set apart for the support of the Red Army and was cultivated by conscript labour. On the other hand discipline in the Red Army was then and always has been extremely strict and casual looting (a common vice in all other Chinese armies) was strictly forbidden. The Red Army soldier who wanted food had to pay for it. This, then, was the land policy of the Soviet Government. It was not a Communist policy but aimed at creating a society of small yeomen farmers owning their own land. A small experiment at communal ownership was soon abandoned as a failure. Nevertheless, this policy of land reform was the basis of the Communists' success and popularity.

It gave the Chinese farmers what they had always wanted and what no other Government had ever given them. It suited the Chinese character which is highly individual. It benefited all except the few rich farmers and landlords whose disappearance few regretted. And it went straight to the root of the land problem which has always been the main problem of China. Nothing is more significant than the fact that when the Nanking Government drove the Communists from Kiangsi in 1934 it was forced to leave unchanged in many areas the new division of the land.

But if land reform was the most important part of the Communists' policy it was by no means the largest nor even the most characteristic part. If I were asked what is at once the wisest and most potent virtue of the Red Army I should be inclined to say education. Wherever they go the Communists begin to educate the peasants. Since in most provinces nearly 80 per cent of the people are illiterate they have a wide field for their energy. The wisdom of this policy is unquestioned for until the Chinese farmer can read and write he will not be able to learn new and scientific methods of agriculture which are necessary if he is to increase his output. As a political stroke it is also wise, for with the first characters the peasant learns his propaganda. It is not necessarily Communist propaganda and recently it has chiefly been patriotic propaganda,

but it naturally gives the Communists a hold over the population. The children learn first and are sent to teach their parents. Songs are sung, lectures given, plays acted in rough shelters or in caves in the red hills of Shansi. To the people Communism often means not only a new party and a new policy but a new life. It is one of the advantages of the Communist parties in all countries that, respecting no tradition (except their own) they are not bound by it. In China the Communists at once teach the peasants that women are equal to men, that marriage should be by mutual consent and that concubinage is evil. More striking still, the peasants accept these new doctrines and without apparent effort throw off the customs of two thousand years. It is often said that one cannot change the character of a people by changing its laws but the Red Army has struck at this maxim. Those who have known China for twenty years cannot believe that these ardent young Communists are of the same stock as the passive and enduring people of the coastal towns. The Kuomintang set out to make a new China; the Communists, more daring, have set themselves to renew the Chinese race.

It is a curious fact that the Chinese Communists appear to be more "Marxist" in their foreign policy than in their domestic policy. Visitors (both willing and unwilling) have found them intensely interested in the international situation which they interpret

strictly according to the Marxist text book. British missionaries who fall into the hands of the Red Army risk execution as servants of an Imperialist Power but a Swiss missionary was treated more leniently as the Communists had never heard of Switzerland and a missionary from New Zealand enjoyed considerable sympathy as a member of a "subject race". On most political and economic subjects they adopt the Marxist jargon though it is doubtful how far they can understand its meaning. Some of this is undoubtedly due to a connexion with Moscow and the Comintern. Few of the Communist leaders have ever been in Russia or, indeed, outside China, but at different times they have been in close contact with Russian Communists. This connexion was strong at the beginning of the revolution, gradually weakened during the long struggle against the Central Government (while Stalin devoted his energies to establishing Socialism and his own power in Russia) and has probably increased again since the Long March which brought the Chinese Communists in geographical proximity to the Soviet frontiers. It would, however, be a great mistake to imagine that the Chinese version of Communism is not an indigenous movement and is therefore doomed to eventual failure. It is not impossible that "Communism with peasant ownership" may prove to be the answer to the problems of all the countries of the Orient.

It is natural to ask what kind of men are the leaders of the Chinese Communists who have accomplished such extraordinary feats. Many of these men are now famous in China; half-a-dozen of them are among the few Chinese names known to the newspaper readers of the West. Some are natural peasant leaders, the Wat Tylers of modern China. A few might once have deserved the name of bandit though, as we have already seen, to be a bandit in China is no more discreditable than to be unemployed in England. But the majority are former students and sons of the gentry, members of that Left wing of the intelligentsia which was submerged in the second revolution of 1926-7. They are educated men, passionate idealists, patriots and revolutionaries. One or two even were grown men in comfortable circumstances when, like Buddha, St. Francis or St. Ignatius Loyola, they decided to give away their wealth and comforts, to leave their homes and families, and to follow the Red Army in its wanderings across the dusty hills of China. Of the great names we may mention three in greater detail: Chu Teh, the Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army; Mao Tze-tung, the political leader; and Chou En-lai, the practical politician and diplomatist.

Chu Teh was the son of a wealthy landowning family in Yunnan. As a young man he enjoyed to the full all the advantages which wealth could give

him: women, luxury and power. His adventurous nature took him into the Nationalist Army which overthrew the Manchu Dynasty in 1911 and he rose quickly to a position of power and influence in his own province. It was not until he was middle-aged that he began to think and to read and by then he had become an inveterate opium addict. By a supreme effort of will he broke himself of this habit, travelled to Europe with other Chinese revolutionaries and returned to China where, when the opportunity came, he went over to the Communists who eagerly welcomed his military experience. In 1931 he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army in Kiangsi and it was he who led the Communists in their long march to the North-west. Chu Teh is a type of the serious adventurer. He has something of the Robin Hood touch. Simple, democratic, easily accessible, he receives unbounded devotion from his followers both because his picturesque character appeals to their imagination and because of his genuine care for their well-being. He is violent and moody, yet not averse to occasional buffoonery. A curious character which might well appeal to brave and simple men in any country.

Mao Tze-tung is the theorist of the party, the doctrinaire. His parents were well-to-do peasants in Hunan. A man of outstanding intellectual power he seems to have been attracted to Communism

at an early age and was a member of the Chinese Communist Party from its foundation in 1921. He worked for the party in Canton during the period of collaboration with the Kuomintang and after the split joined the Communist soldiers under Chu Teh. Mao Tze-tung has inevitably been compared to Lenin to whom, indeed, he has a certain resemblance. He is reserved, austere, confident of his intellectual judgment. His weapons are the typically Chinese ones of compromise, secrecy and diplomacy, but he generally gets his way in the end. Like Lenin, too, he has organising ability which has proved of the greatest value to the Communists in the administration of the civil areas which they have occupied. He is, in many ways, the greatest of the Chinese Communist leaders—some say one of the greatest living men.

Chou En-lai is the son of a great Mandarin family of the finest type. His father and mother were brilliant and cultured people; he himself was naturally a scholar and seemed marked out for a literary career. The wave of the revolution caught him at an impressionable age while he was still a student in Tientsin. He became a prominent member of the Left wing intelligentsia in Canton. So much was not unusual but Chou En-lai showed a talent of a different sort when he was sent to Shanghai in 1925 to organise a general strike among the workers. Though he had no practical experience

and, indeed, no knowledge of the working classes, his success was immediate and overwhelming. When the Nationalist Army arrived in Shanghai the city was already in the hands of the strikers under Chou En-lai. When General Chiang Kai-shek made his famous "coup d'état" Chou had to fly for his life and after many adventures joined the other Communists in Kiangsi. Chou's personality, perhaps, is less striking than that of the other leaders, but he is the perfect example of the intellectual revolutionary to-day. Cool, unemotional, he is guided by the logic of his doctrine to undertake tasks that seem unfitted for his nature.

It is a paradox of modern politics that in every country the Communists, who themselves lay such stress on doctrine and dogma, should have been successful rather because of political skill and practical energy. And if so far I have given little but praise to the Chinese Communists it is because they are by far the most vital force in China to-day. They have shown a practical vigour both in peace and war which, it seems, must inevitably give them a large share in the China of the future. But they are not without faults. They, are for instance, ruthless to the point of cruelty and in Kiangsi were undoubtedly guilty of several massacres either of the gentry who opposed them or of dissident members within their own ranks. They have the vices of all revolutionaries and especially of Marxist

revolutionaries. They teach hatred, ruthlessness and contempt for tradition. In their eagerness to create a new China they do not care whether they destroy what was good in the old—and there was much that was good. They are fanatical, puritanical, intolerant. They despise that good-humoured laziness so characteristic of the old China which, though out of place in the present crisis may yet be an essential ingredient of all true civilisation. This is an age when these things are despised, when new and violent faiths are preached, and when liberals, moderates and sceptics together are condemned in China as well as in Europe.

CHAPTER III

THE NANKING GOVERNMENT

THE man whom the second revolution of 1927 placed in power has since won recognition throughout the world as one of the greatest leaders of the age. But at that time foreigners in China used to refer to General Chiang Kai-shek as a "reformed bandit" or an "emancipated warlord." Even the most intelligent observers believed that he was no more than an able, unscrupulous and ambitious ruler though they recognised in him certain qualities which were, to say the least, unusual in Chinese officials. He had great organising ability and was not content to leave plans on paper. He was industrious and, more important, pertinacious; he had the power of concentration in a high degree. He was, like so many of the modern dictators, personally ascetic, uninterested in comfort and luxury. Though he married into the richest family in China he never used the wealth thus acquired for himself. All these qualities are common among civil servants in Britain or Germany though rare among Chinese bureaucrats but at the same time he had many qualities which were essentially Chinese.

He is (as the Japanese have learnt to their annoyance) a brilliant and subtle diplomatist. He is a true politician in the worst as well as the best sense of that word. He understands the use of compromise and has never hesitated to forgive his enemies or, one must add, to betray his friends. His personality is, to the Western way of thinking, unattractive. He is no popular demagogue. You will not see pictures of General Chiang, like Hitler or Mussolini, playing with children or patting dogs. He is austere, reserved and stern. He is also a strict Puritan (there is no other word) which may partly be due to his conversion to Christianity and to one of the more austere sects of Christianity—Methodism. His moral lectures to the nation remind one of the tales told of the Roman Republic with its ancient virtues of *gravitas*, *dignitas*, *simplicitas*. On the other hand there can be no doubt that he sought power and enjoys its use; he is certainly no unwilling tyrant drawn into public life for the good of the nation. But experience has greatly moderated this side of his character and he has developed a breadth of statesmanship which has astonished those who knew the ambitious young warlord of 1926.

The problems which faced General Chiang in 1927 were so vast that he might have been excused if he had not even attempted to solve them.

Power had been divided among numerous war-lords several of whom still maintained powerful armies and had no intention of recognising this new authority. It is true the Kuomintang Congress convened in Nanking in 1928 seemed to be the beginning of definite political unity in China. With the exception of the former Hankow Government and its Army in the Province of Kiangsi and part of Fukien, every Provincial Governor and every former military leader attended the Congress, pledged loyalty to the new Central Government and agreed to demobilise their troops. These two million men under arms had to be provided with employment on returning home, to prevent their becoming nomad bandits. Accordingly an internal loan of 80 million Chinese dollars was raised, a bold financial reform was adopted, large plans of economic reconstruction were proclaimed, the pursuit of science and experimental research was handsomely endowed, new Universities and Central Training Schools were created, a Ministry of Health and Social Welfare set up; great impetus was given to secondary and elementary education and to the uplift movement for the masses. Party organisation was supplanting, and sometimes wastefully duplicating, the existing administrative machinery, under the slogan of political unity; and the writ of the Central Government was recognised in the remotest Provinces.

This romance began to fade when Chiang, while pressing the Provinces to demobilise, utilised the best part of the demobilisation loan to set up (with, as brilliant organiser, General Von Seeckt, creator of the professional army of Germany by the Treaty of Versailles) divisions of modern, well-equipped, well disciplined troops—this in order to consolidate the political unity pledged by almost all.

For several years after the fall of the Manchu Dynasty, the Warlords fought one another to maintain themselves in power. Civil war in 1927 was a succession of provincial rebellions against the inevitable centralising grip of the National Government. They enabled the German-trained Central Army to become seasoned troops. The Central Government had public opinion on its side, as represented by banks, industrial and agricultural interests, officials, intelligentsia and the Party organisation—all of whom ardently favoured unity, recognising Chiang as a nationalist leader and abhorring the prospect of reverting to a rule of unprincipled militarists. Against it were ranged Left wing dissidents, who would not join the Communists and whose suspicions of Chiang's personal ambition were subjectively justified by his refusal to share office with them.

There were also Trade Union leaders displaced by party henchmen from their positions of trust,

a large group of intellectuals opposed to dictatorship of any kind, and finally, the local government workers of all types in the various Provinces as well as local political leaders who, while ready to recognise the far-reaching competence of the Central Government in ordinary matters, favoured a Federal connexion between the Provinces of a Republic containing one-fifth of the human race.

The historic trend was on the side of the Central Government but so were also unity of command, superior armament, control of the bulk of revenue, brilliant financing and the friendly relations established with the Great Powers. Provincial rebellions were suppressed one by one, sometimes with heavy losses—the most serious being settled through a timely intervention of the so-called “Young Marshal” Chang Tso-liang, Warlord of Manchuria. This was in 1930; some fifteen months later the first Japanese attack on China’s territory began—it was a testimony to the success of the National Government!

The Centre of Chiang’s power now reverted from the Kuomintang organisation to his military following. The Generalissimo’s Headquarters became the supreme organ of Government, Party leaders anxious to uphold the rule of the civilian were dismissed or imprisoned, and while lip service was scrupulously paid to Sun Yat-sen’s memory, local party committees, previously omnipotent, fell into

the background, although the Nationalist military clique exercised its new power in the name of the three principles of the People and the revolution against "Reactionaries."

All dissidents, Left wing radicals and Communists were styled "counter-revolutionaries", "reactionaries" or "bandits". Military supremacy can only maintain itself under the slogan of national defence. The campaign against the Red Armies in Kiangsi provided the necessary excuse, and if the Communist troops were not crushed more rapidly, it was largely due to Chiang's dilatory methods, to provide him with justification for raising successive national defence loans and to give him time to increase his armies. The military concentration against Kiangsi gave him an ideal strategic position, by which, dominating the wealthiest part of Central China, he could easily crush any incipient provincial insurrection while remaining practically immune to attack.

With the rule of military Headquarters thus assured, Chiang with his usual political intuition, provided himself with a civilian machinery of Government composed of the best technical talent amongst "Young China"—scientists and administrators, mostly graduates from American Universities or the London School of Economics, who had already obtained recognition of their practical experience. These penetrated into all the Ministries

and Governmental commissions and at the same time constituted a central "National Resources Commission" with the main object of carefully preparing the plans for the defence of the country against what Chiang by then considered inevitable—a large-scale Japanese war.

China's relations with foreign Powers were equally unhappy. Japan, who had everything to gain by seeing China disrupted rather than unified, was just entering on that period of imperialist pressure which reached its climax in the present war. If the Western Powers were showing more restraint and even some liberal tendencies, it should not be forgotten that they already had everything they could desire. In 1927 China was still in the position of a semi-independent country.

It should be remembered, too, that at this time General Chiang was by no means an absolute dictator. His word was supreme in all military matters and he possessed, no doubt, more political influence than any other single individual. But his power to decide policy was shared among a small group of leaders who worked within the structure of the government and the party, and they in their turn had to consider carefully the will of the Party Congress. This was, theoretically, the supreme organ of the Kuomintang and therefore of the Government which it elected. Fortunately for Chiang, there is no doubt that in this period his

policy did in fact represent the wishes of the majority. The Nanking Government could justly claim the support of the Right wing intellectuals, the country gentry, the bourgeoisie in the cities—in fact, of the ruling classes. As for the rest, the long period of anarchy and unrest, though accentuating the historic tendency towards regionalism, had also taught many Chinese that even a second-best government was better than no government at all.

General Chiang's great ambition was to unite China. For this aim he employed three weapons; one economic, which we shall deal with more thoroughly in the next chapter; one political; and one military. The last two he frequently used at the same time, like those old duellists who carried a sword in one hand and a dagger in the other. So Chiang would argue politely with some recalcitrant warlord while he moved up his troops to the border of the warlord's province. In the last resort it was the Central Government army which made his policy possible: it was, so to speak, the final and unanswerable argument. Well armed, well trained by German officers, regularly paid (an unusual thing with Chinese armies) and personally devoted to General Chiang, these divisions became the nucleus of a formidable force. They were so clearly a match for any provincial army that warlords rarely insisted on putting the matter to the test, and if they did, the dispute was quickly settled.



10. THE CHINESE PROVINCES

So General Chiang steadily enlarged the perimeter of his authority until but few provinces remained outside. The last to succumb were the provinces of Kwangsi and Kwangtung in the South, and the North, where Japanese influence was predominant. When, for instance, Chiang entered Shantung in May, 1927, the Japanese Government sent troops to protect Japanese residents and property in that province, and clashes with the Nationalist forces occurred both then and in the spring of 1928 when the Japanese forces occupied Tsinan and blocked the way to Peking.

But the Japanese were then chiefly concerned with Manchuria which was still a part of China (as legally it is to-day) but which they already regarded almost as a dependency. On May 28, 1928, Baron Tanaka announced that, if disturbances developed further in the direction of Peking and Tientsin, Japan "may possibly be constrained to take appropriate and effective steps for the maintenance of peace and order in Manchuria". At the same time he stated that the Japanese Government would prevent "defeated troops or those in pursuit of them" from entering Manchuria, and urged General Chang Tso-lin, the Old Marshal and most powerful warlord in the North, who was hard pressed by the Kuomintang troops, to withdraw into Manchuria before it was too late. Reluctantly Chang followed this advice, leaving Peking on June 3. The next day

he was killed by an explosion which wrecked his train. His murder was widely attributed to the Japanese who aimed at the prevention of an understanding between him and the National Government and at the establishment of an independent State in Manchuria under a successor more amenable to Japanese influence. But if this was true, they had badly miscalculated. In June, 1928, the Nationalists entered Peking and in December the Old Marshal's son, Chang Hsueh-liang, the Young Marshal, came to terms with the Nanking Government in spite of Japanese disapproval and was confirmed by it in the administration of Manchuria and Jehol.

Szechwan only finally gave up its independence during the present war when its old warlord died (a natural death) and the Nanking Government moved west in its flight from the Japanese. The quarrel with the South was settled in the summer of 1936. What appeared to be an incipient rebellion by the military commanders of Kwangtung and Kwangsi collapsed when General Chiang moved his trained divisions southward. The people of Canton withdrew their support from the Kwangtung warlord and his air force flew over to the other side. Thus isolated the military commanders of Kwangsi, the able Generals Li Tsung-jen and Pai Chung-si very sensibly came to terms with the Nanking Government and General Chiang very sensibly forgave their rebellion. The whole affair might be

considered as a masterly example of the superiority of Eastern political methods over those of the West.

One of the chief obstacles to central government in China has always been the vast size of the country itself and the lack of communications. As Sir Arthur Salter has said: "In the last analysis, what distinguishes China from Western countries—what has also made its development far slower than that of Japan and has thus profoundly influenced the whole course of contemporary history in the Pacific—is the time which it takes to proceed from one part of the country to another, and the difficulty of speedy action whether in the maintenance of order, the relief of distress or the introduction of new measures of social organisation."

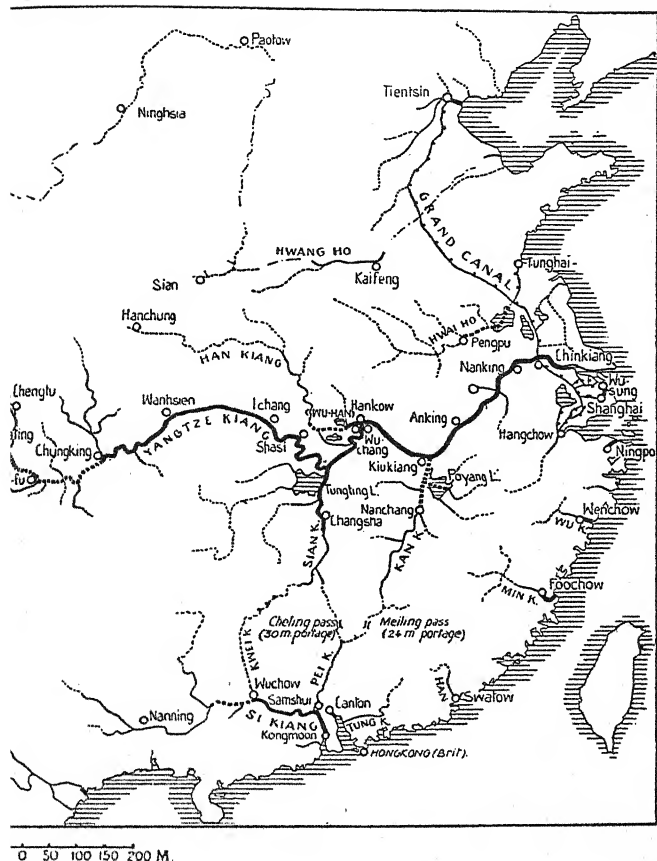
This physical handicap General Chiang endeavoured to remedy. On the following pages will be found maps illustrating the roads, railways and airways in China at the beginning of the present war. They deserve careful study. The most obvious thing which will be noticed is how pitifully inadequate is the road and rail system even after the efforts of the Nanking Government. Large areas, and by no means the least populated, have no railway at all and no road fit for motor traffic. Another important point is that it is far easier for Chinese to travel from North to South than from East to West though this is to a certain extent remedied by the navigable water-

NAVIGATION IN CHINA

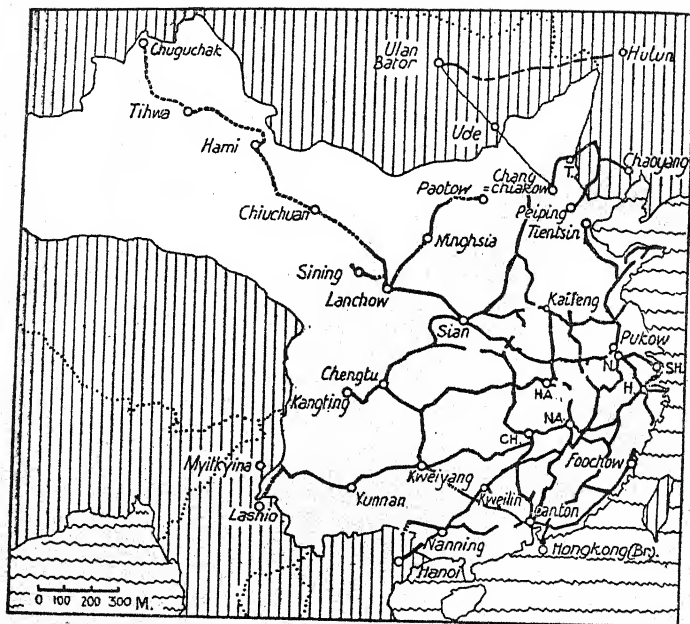
- ~~-----~~ Steamship navigation
- Steam launches with barges.
- Large native boats and occasional motor launches.
- Small boats, rafts, native craft.
- Main canals.
- Hwang Ho, where not navigable.

F. A. Fang estimates the waterways open for steamers at	4,000 miles
Ditto, for steam launches	15,000 „
Ditto, for native craft of all kinds	27,000 „
Total	<u>46,000</u> „

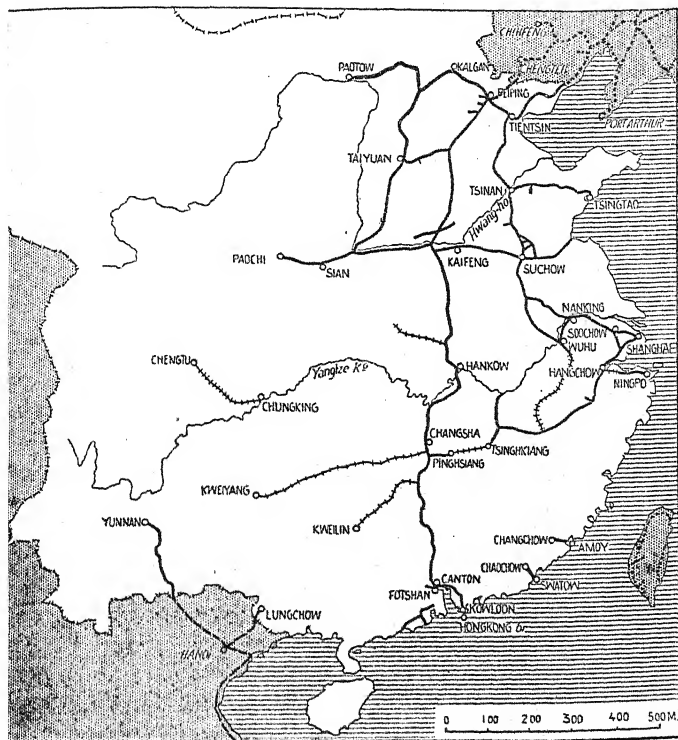
G. B. Cressey estimates that there are 200,000 miles of canals in China, majority of which are in the Yangtze Plain and serve to transport, irrigation, etc.



No. 11.



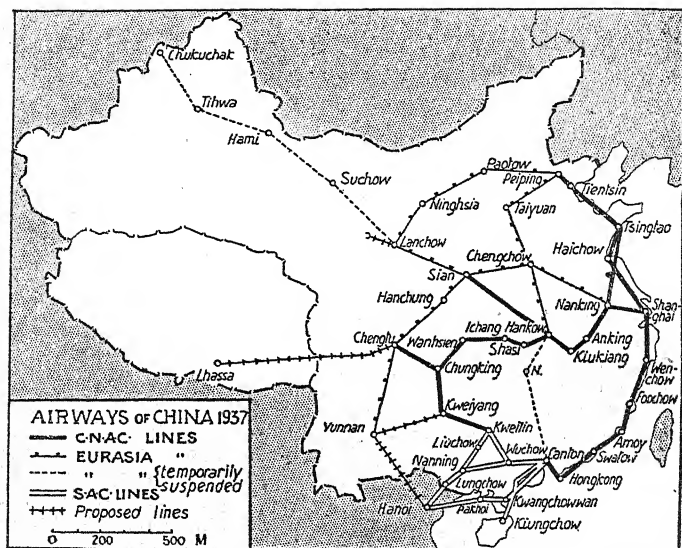
12. PRINCIPAL ROADS OPEN TO MOTOR TRAFFIC (1938)



RAILWAYS MAY 1938

— RAILWAYS OPEN TO TRAFFIC --- IN CONSTRUCTION JAPANESE R. - . - FRENCH R.

No. 13.



No. 14.

ways which run from the Western mountains towards the Eastern sea. Indeed the Yangtze Kiang, with its 2,000 miles open for steamers in the summer when the water is highest, is by far the most important line of communication in China, a fact which has been appreciated as much by the Western Powers and by Japan as by the Chinese themselves. But travel upon it is slow and the Yangtze only serves the important cities lying in its broad valley. Though railway communications between North and South are rather better, it should be remembered that the important line from Hankow to Canton was completed only in 1936 just in time (as events showed) to save China in the war. Most of China's railways moreover, have been built with foreign capital and often by foreign engineers, though since 1928 and especially during the present war, Chinese railway engineers have proved themselves as capable as those of any other nation.

The Nanking Government first concentrated on the roads. In this respect, inevitably, they were influenced rather by military considerations than by political or economic. The urgency of the need also encouraged the use of methods which defeated their own ends. These strategic roads were built generally by forced labour (the "corvee" system was introduced in 16 provinces) and frequently on land confiscated from the peasant owners without compensation and along routes already served to some

extent by railways or waterways. In some cases their use was forbidden to barrows and carts carrying produce. The money for their construction, of course, came as usual from the land taxes and added to the intolerable burden borne by the peasant farmers. For these reasons one cannot give unqualified praise to the manner in which the road programme of the Nanking Government was put to practice. Yet the work done was considerable. In 1927, when the National Government came into power, China had about 15,000 kilometres of road suitable for motor traffic; at the beginning of the war she had a little more than 100,000 kilometres. It is now possible to motor from Shanghai across the whole of Central China through the remote province of Szechwan to the very edge of Tibet; and the building of another trunk road through North-west China has reduced the time taken to traverse those provinces from a possible four weeks to less than four days.

The Government had neither sufficient time nor money to extend the railway system appreciably. An intensive programme was undertaken in which Great Britain, Germany, France and Belgium have all participated, but the only great achievement was the completion of the line from Canton to Hankow, the only railway linking up the Southern provinces with the Yangtze valley. Yet at the beginning of the war China (including Manchuria) had only

6,700 miles of railways compared with the 254,000 miles in the comparable area of the United States.

The Nanking Government also turned to the air. China is in many ways ideally suited for the development of air traffic. Great distances, high mountains and broad rivers offer no obstacle to the modern air liner. It has been remarked that those countries which lagged behind the rest of the world in the nineteenth century while road and rail transport were developed, have in this century taken all the more easily to the air, missing out, so to speak, a stage or two in the natural order of progress. China is one of those countries. The efficient China National Aviation Corporation and the still more efficient Eurasia line (run chiefly by German pilots with German 'planes) have covered the country with a network of airways. Journeys which took tedious weeks by rail, road and steamer now take hours or days at most, and Government officials leaving their offices in Nanking after breakfast can arrive in some distant provincial capital by sunset—sometimes to the embarrassment of provincial authorities. The Chinese have shown themselves good natural pilots and clever though careless mechanics. They have not yet begun, however, to build 'planes themselves. That will come in time and China's future must lie to a considerable extent in the air above her dusty plains and yellow turgid rivers.

In spite of General Chiang's many achievements he still failed in his principal aim—the creation of a Chinese nation. For this several circumstances were responsible. First, one must put the constant pressure of Japan who, during the period from 1927 until 1937 when she finally went to war, did everything in her power to hinder the Government's efforts at reconstruction. Later we shall deal with this subject in greater detail; for the moment it is sufficient to remember that this pressure never relaxed, that during this period China lost the Manchurian provinces, fought a brief war in Shanghai, its greatest city, and saw Japanese control and influence extend further and further down into North China. If General Chiang had declared a policy of resistance to Japanese aggression he might have rallied the country behind him in a way nothing else could have done, but he knew that until China was stronger resistance could mean only disaster. He chose instead to fight the Communists, partly for reasons of personal prejudice, partly to conciliate the Japanese and partly in order to train his armies for the inevitable war against Japan. But by choosing this policy he willingly surrendered to the devil the best tunes—the national call to fight against foreign imperialism. This had been the inspiration of the Kuomintang revolution which had put the Nanking Government in power, and after 1927 the Chinese people were naturally puzzled

to find that their government courted these Western powers which had so long oppressed them and conciliated Japan which was now threatening their very existence. They saw, on the other hand, that the Communists, whom their Government persecuted and denounced, actually called for unity against Japan and the Western Powers. No wonder that many simple farmers believed the Communist agitators who went through the villages denouncing General Chiang as "the running-dog of the imperialists".

Serious as this was, the Nanking Government suffered from a still more grievous handicap. It did not represent the masses of the people, the peasants and small farmers who are China. It had rejected any drastic policy of land reform because its supporters, the gentry and the sons of the gentry, were dependent on land rentals for their income. Yet these same farmers had paid for what reconstruction there had been without benefiting from it. Taxation had increased to pay for the new strategic roads and the modern army which General Chiang was building. The old evil land-tax remained what it had been and in certain districts new surtaxes had multiplied the burden by over 300 per cent. The process went on uninterruptedly: farmers went bankrupt, sold their land and became tenants. Agricultural prices fell. Conditions deteriorated. In such circumstances it was hardly surprising that

the masses of the people still regarded the local officials and administrators as their natural enemies even though they were appointed by this new and glorious government which was to make a new China.

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

The following chapter is not intended to be read during a railway journey or, indeed, in a comfortable chair, but to be used for reference and information. It can be omitted without seriously interrupting what little narrative there is.

CHAPTER IV

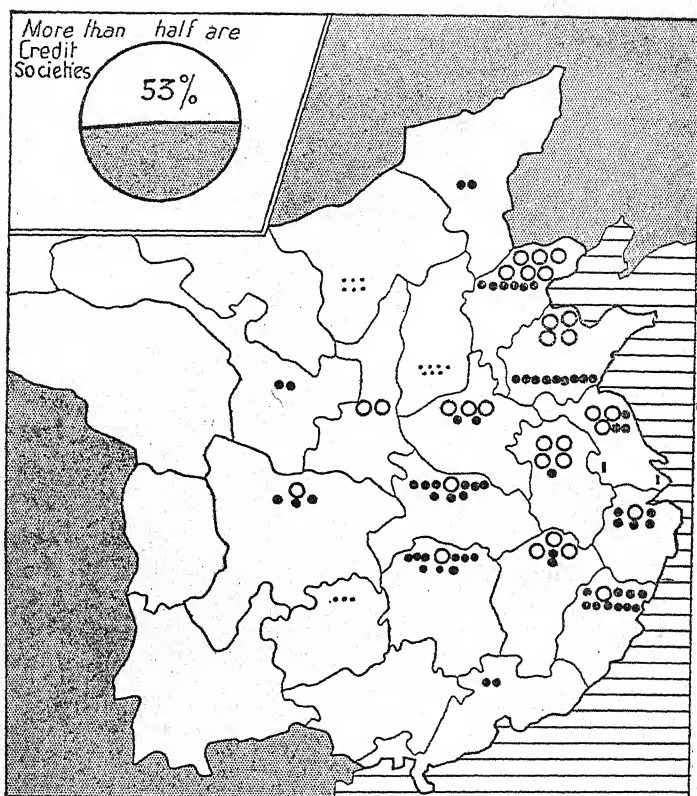
REFORM AND RECONSTRUCTION

THE Nanking Government, however, also had plans for the reform and reconstruction of the countryside. These plans were influenced partly by the necessity to fight the Communists with their own weapons—as General Chiang once said, the anti-communist campaign was to be based on 70 per cent of political methods and 30 per cent of military methods. But it would be wrong to discount a very real desire for reform among the Kuomintang leaders without any such stimulus. Unfortunately, perhaps, the predominance of the army in the new government gave all the plans a military twist from the start. They began, from the principle that without law and order economic development is impossible, so their first concern was to organise an efficient police system. For this purpose the Government revised an ancient Chinese system known as “Pao-chia”. Pao-chia is really a system of local self-government based on small units of 10 homes (a chia) or of 100 homes (a pao). The householders elect leaders with administrative and minor judicial functions. But the distinctive feature which appealed to the Nanking

Government is that the unit guarantees the behaviour of each of its members and is responsible for their misdeeds. So when any man is wanted by the police, the pao to which he belongs must produce him or be held responsible for his offence. On the whole, this system is not only a fairly effective police measure but well enough suited to the needs of the Chinese people, but the army was unwilling to let the democratic side of it develop. It believed that the peasant should do what he was told and that he was incapable of managing his own affairs. It encouraged the organisation of the people on military lines in militia corps which could be used either for a military or civilian purpose. Government by local committees in which the small farmer might have some say gave way to government by military officials.

The civilian group in the Kuomintang, though no more willing to grant the peasants a measure of democratic government, was at least more interested in economic reforms. It could not, like the Communists, cut at the root of the land problem by "liquidating" the landlords, dividing up the land and abolishing rents; but it recognised the ills from which the peasant suffered. These were (and are) the low output of agriculture, the high cost of credit, the burden of taxation (especially of the land tax surcharges) and the uneconomic system of land tenure. The first of these ills, being politically the

least dangerous, was attacked first. The Government made serious and partly successful efforts to help the farmer with technical aid and advice. Any real progress in this direction, however, was dependent on the second ill being cured, the lack of cheap credit. Cheap and abundant credit is always a condition of economic progress and is nowhere more needed than where incomes are small and margins over bare subsistence meagre. The Government attacked this problem by encouraging the spread of co-operative societies. A map on the following page shows very clearly the growth of the co-operative movement which has astonished foreign observers. In the three years from 1933 to 1936 the number of societies increased from 5,000 to over 15,000 and more than half of these were credit societies. There is no doubt at all that this development has helped to get rid of village usury and therefore to make the peasant's burden lighter. Once again, unfortunately, it is necessary to make certain qualifications. There is a tendency for these co-operative societies to fall into the hands of the landlords and gentry who use them to defend their own interests. In some provinces, for instance, the local committees were said to absorb two dollars for every one dollar loaned to the farmer. There is a need for effective measures by the State to insure that the movement benefits the poor and illiterate peasants who need it most.



Cooperative societies } ○ 1000 ● 100 10

15. THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

The third of the peasants' ills is taxation, and here the civilian group of the Kuomintang was frankly opposed by the military group, which depended on provincial revenues for the maintenance of its new armies not to mention the prosecution of its civil wars. In this respect little or nothing was done to relieve the peasant. And the last of the four ills, the system of land tenure and the high rents, proved most intractable of all. The civilian group did manage to put an Act on the Statute Book fixing rents at $37\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the produce (high enough in all conscience) but there have been only half-hearted attempts to put it into force. General Chiang Kai-shek himself declared that it was the policy of the Government to restrict large holdings with the ultimate aim that every man should own his own land, but in practice this policy was only put into effect in parts of Kiangsi where the Communists had already done it. It must therefore be admitted that the Nanking Government in the few years in which it was allowed to work unhindered failed to solve the fundamental problem of China—the land problem. The peasant's lot was improved slightly by the development of credit societies, by the construction of new roads, by a more stable government which protected him from the rapacity of warlords and generals, but in all essentials it remained the same.

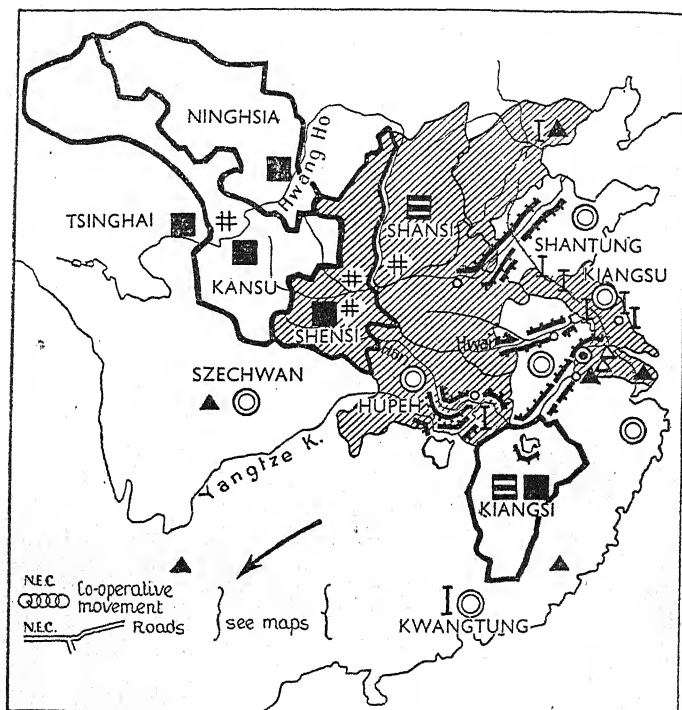
If we consider economic reconstruction in a wider

sense the picture is a brighter one. At the head of this work was the National Economic Council, founded in 1931 and reorganised in 1933. The N.E.C. represented the best of the civilian group in the Kuomintang. Formed originally to plan and to co-ordinate the work of the different ministries it became in the end one of the chief executive bodies in the administration. Stiffened by foreign experts sent by the League of Nations to serve as advisers and staffed largely by young and able Chinese educated abroad, the N.E.C. became the most intelligent and enterprising organisation in China. A map on page 100 illustrates the extent of its many activities. It was the N.E.C. which undertook the teaching of better methods to the farmers and the supply of better seeds. It was the N.E.C. which encouraged the development of co-operative societies already referred to. It established schools, training centres, hospitals and welfare centres and medical schools. It took charge of irrigation and flood prevention. Its methods, too, were sympathetic and intelligent. Relying on education rather than force it did its best to improve the lot of the peasant. Unfortunately its success depended on the assistance of the provincial officials over whom it had no direct authority, on the support of the military group which was not always forthcoming and on funds supplied by the Government which had other bills to pay. For instance, its work to prevent floods

was frankly inadequate chiefly because of lack of capital. The damage to life and property caused by floods each year in China is colossal and every few years there are fearful disasters such as that caused last summer by the breaking of the Yellow River dykes. Control of these sprawling unmanageable rivers should be the first concern of any Chinese Government. But in spite of its limitations the N.E.C. was a splendid example of what the new China (even "bourgeois" China) can do.

The National Government applied to the League in December, 1929, for the despatch of a sanitary mission to advise the Central authorities on the organisation of a modern public health and quarantine service. After a detailed survey, undertaken by the mission, a Three-Year Plan was drawn up, providing for the establishment of a central training and research medical and health institutions equipped with experimental field stations, the gradual taking over of the quarantine service, and co-ordination of the various modern centres of public health activity already existing in the country. The central institutions began operating before the close of that period, under the direction and with the collaboration of some twenty-five members of the Station and affiliated organisations who were given facilities by the League for acquiring the necessary experience abroad. Laboratories and health centres were established in nine Provinces and the Quarantine Service


RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL.







No. 16.

The National Economic Council was founded in 1931 and re-organised in 1933. Originally intended as a planning and supervising body, it came by force of circumstances to play in many instances an executive part; its staff has been the shock troops of Chinese reconstruction. Generally it has sought to co-operate with provincial governments and most of the projects shown on the map are the result of such joint enterprise.




Reference to Map opposite :

-  Area in which the National Economic Council has been chiefly interested.




Hydraulics.

-  Land reclamation, improvement of navigation, channels, sluices, etc.
-  Flood Prevention.
-  Irrigation works.
-  Hydraulics research stations.

Rural rehabilitation.

-  Area of scheme of improved cotton cultivation—by distribution of improved cotton seeds, co-operative marketing system, etc.
-  Centres of schemes for improved sericulture.
-  Rural welfare centres (which include health centres).

Public Health.

-  Central Field Health Station (Nanking)—which co-ordinates all public health institutions.
-  Principal epidemic bureaux and health centres.
-  Important medical schools, hygienic laboratories, hospitals, etc., connected with the Central Field Health Station.

The activities of the N.E.C. in road building and in the co-operative movement are not shown in the map, having been already illustrated on pages 84 and 96.

The National Economic Council is the organ to which are attached the foreign experts sent by the League of Nations. These experts serve in an advisory, not executive, capacity; the number thus serving between 1931 and 1937 was a little over thirty, and League experts have at one time or another visited every province in China.

was functioning in several ports, after consultations had been arranged by the League with sanitary services of the chief maritime powers and the international Chambers of Shipping. In view of the results achieved, and at the suggestion of the National Government, the League in 1931 accepted a proposal for further technical collaboration, namely:—

From 1931 to 1933 accordingly, the League sent to China: 5 hygienists, 9 educationalists, 8 consulting Engineers, 4 economists and Financiers, 2 administrators for the reorganisation of the Civil Service in addition to the visit of two high officials of the Secretariat.

During this period the activities of the National Economic Council developed rapidly, being provided by the National Government with funds amounting to four and a half million Chinese dollars.

At the time of the disastrous floods of the Yangtze Valley, Sir John Hope Simpson, one of the most experienced League field workers, was appointed by the Chinese Government as Director General of the National Flood Relief Commission. In 1933, in the light of the experience gained, a request was made for the appointment of a Technical Delegate of the League to act as Chief Co-ordinating Technical Officer in China, who accordingly arrived there towards the end of 1933.

With the assistance of League experts, as well as the collaboration of Sir Arthur Salter and a former Minister of Finance of Democratic Prussia, a number of economic, social and sanitary surveys were made of selected rural regions throughout China, and financial, monetary, economic, social and health surveys were carried out. Advice was given to the Government on important modifications of policy, including land reform.

From 1929 to 1937 studies were made by League experts, after personal visits, of one subject to another, in every Province of China. Most notable progress was accomplished in road-building, irrigation, flood prevention, land reclamation, rural rehabilitation and public health.

These frequent references to foreign specialists may lead to misapprehension as to the contribution which the League rendered in the work of reconstruction. The effectiveness of the services of foreign experts was circumscribed by the necessity, not only of gaining a knowledge of facts, but also of understanding their true significance in a country only a few areas of which were usually visited by them, and among people with whom they could seldom establish direct relationship in view of their unfamiliarity with the language. The extreme affability and hospitality shown to the foreign expert often prevent him from realising the great effort required of his Chinese colleague in affording him all requisite

information, in continually translating relevant documents for him into a language he could understand, and the responsibility felt in the selection of the data to be made available for the common study.

One of the most hopeful prospects for the success of reconstruction in China lies in the manifold activities of a large number of its citizens trained in many fields of technical work who carry on their work steadily, away from the limelight of publicity, in a spirit of public service and guided by the interest of accomplishment. These men, having known the disillusion attendant on changes of political programmes and political régimes and having passed through bitter experience of calamity and war at home and of the ineffectiveness of measures of international collaboration on major issues, have now devoted themselves resolutely to practical work. Their background of solid technical knowledge was acquired partly in China, partly abroad. Having given a good deal of thought to the study of the economic machinery of leading countries in the world, many of them have gained a remarkable, and perhaps generally unsuspected, insight into Western practice in fields of public endeavour—financial, economic, industrial and agricultural—and often into the philosophy underlying public policy in foreign lands.

The Nanking Government was greatly helped in its programme of reform by the spread of education

in China. Until 1927 (that is, after 1905 when the decree abolishing the old examination system was published) this was largely in the hands of foreign missionaries and especially of American missionaries, whose influence on modern China has been profound. But it is doubtful whether education directed by foreigners can ever entirely satisfy the needs of China, and the increase in colleges, schools and universities run by Chinese (illustrated in the map on page 109) has been of greater significance. For the same reason Chinese students educated abroad in French, British, German, Russian and American universities are inclined to find life difficult for them when they return to their native country, though some of the leading men in China to-day were once "returned students". The difficulty has been well put by Mr. Bertrand Russell in his book *The Problem of China*. "The Chinese have a civilisation and a national temperament in many ways superior to those of white men. A few Europeans ultimately discover this, but Americans never do. They remain always missionaries—not of Christianity, though they often think that is what they are preaching, but of Americanism." Mr. Bertrand Russell, however, wrote those words in 1922 and it must be admitted that since then foreign teachers (including Americans) have co-operated well with their Chinese colleagues and with a greater understanding of the needs of modern China.

But the great need is to build up a national system of education on Chinese lines.

It is to the credit of the Kuomintang and the Republican Government that they fully realised this need. One of their first acts was to establish a regular system of education throughout China by a series of laws, but partly owing to lack of experience and partly owing to the chaotic state of the system as it existed, they did not make so much headway as they would have wished. In 1931 the Chinese Government asked the technical organisations of the League to collaborate in the preparation of a scheme of reform. The same year, therefore, the League sent a mission of educational experts (including Professor R. H. Tawney of London) to China.

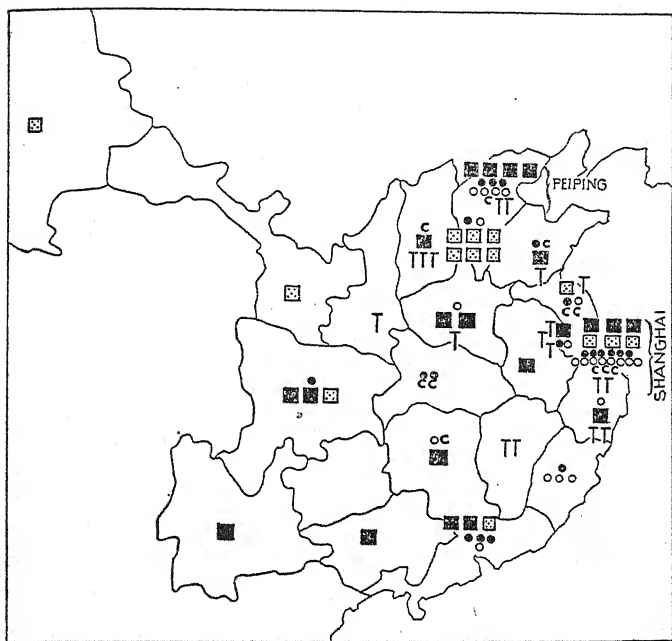
On its arrival the mission found remarkable eagerness among all responsible authorities for reform; the existing system, however, though soundly based, left a good deal to be desired. This system took as its basis the primary school for children aged from 6 to 11. But there were not enough of these schools to provide education even for the number of children who desired it; in 1929, out of 41,400,000 children aged 6 to 9, only 8,839,000 or barely 21 per cent attended primary schools. Yet what accommodation there was was not fully made use of and one teacher was provided for every 20 pupils. As the mission remarked, if this number

was doubled it would be possible to teach not 8,000,000 but 16,000,000 children with the same means. Most children who attended primary schools ended their education when they left at the age of 11 or 12. The more fortunate went to one of three kinds of secondary or middle schools: general middle schools, normal schools and vocational schools. Of these the normal schools were for training teachers and were quite inadequate. As a whole the secondary schools were the weakest link in the system for they did not provide a sufficient general education for those who would have no opportunity to go to a higher school or university. The general course was for six years. Above the secondary schools were the higher technical schools and the 59 universities in which the new China was being forged. In spite of this large number (too large, the mission considered) only about 30,000 students were absorbed by Chinese universities while about 5,000 went to foreign universities abroad before they had graduated in China at all. Most of these students were not able to appreciate what they learnt abroad and returned home full of strange and unsuitable ideas only half digested.

The mission drew up what amounted to a complete plan of reform. Their chief recommendations were that the number of primary schools should be increased as rapidly as possible, and that better use should be made of the buildings and staff which

existed; that the secondary schools should concentrate on giving a sound general education and the training schools for teachers should be given special consideration; and that the number of universities should be reduced. The Government was also advised to discourage if it could not prevent Chinese students from going abroad to foreign universities unless they had already graduated in a Chinese university.

Most of these proposals were accepted by the Chinese authorities and many of them acted upon. When M. Maurette, Assistant Director of the International Labour Office, visited China in 1933 he found that great progress had been made. The number of pupils in primary schools had gone up to about 12,000,000, still, of course, a very small proportion of 400,000,000. The secondary schools had been improved and a definite distinction made between those which gave technical training, those which were designed to train school teachers and those which were primarily intended to give a fair general education to children who would never go to a university but who nevertheless required something more than what was taught in the primary schools. (There were 3,125 secondary schools in China in 1935 compared with 1,142 in 1926.) The number of universities had been reduced from 59 to 41, and the Government had passed a decree providing that passports should be provided only



PUBLIC	{	■	UNIVERSITY	}	PRIVATE
		▣	INDEPENDENT COLLEGE		
		T	TECHNICAL SCHOOL		

17. HIGHER EDUCATION IN CHINA

to those students who had completed an adequate course of study in their own country. M. Maurette made some more recommendations, in particular that the technical schools should concentrate first on agriculture since that was China's greatest industry and greatest need.

There is no doubt that if China had been granted peace and time the educational system would have developed fast. There were even plans for universal compulsory education though these were naturally somewhat theoretical. As it was, the existing system was much more developed in some provinces than in others. To make up for the lack of primary education the Chinese Government had paid particular attention to adult education (known as "Mass Education"). In 1933 there were over 40,000 schools for adults attended by over 4,000,000 "pupils" who learnt to read newspapers and simple books and to appreciate the civic responsibilities of the age into which they had been born. What had already been done was an earnest of what would have been done if Japan had not brought war and destruction. This is another and not the least of China's tragedies.

One of the first and most successful tasks undertaken by the Nanking Government was the restoration of China's finances and the rehabilitation of her credit abroad. This work was directed by T. V. Soong, related to General Chiang Kai-shek

by marriage, who showed remarkable ability and courage. Representative of the small industrial bourgeoisie trained and educated abroad, he understood and appraised the real influence for Chinese reconstruction of the capitalist Powers with whom he had to deal. It was as well that he was so fitted for his task, for in 1937, when the Nanking Government came to power, the position was chaotic. There was no uniformity of currency, no decimal monetary system. Mediæval fiscal practices were the general rule, with only the rudiments of a system of modern financial administration. The Government could not strengthen itself because of inadequate revenue and could not develop adequate revenues because of lack of authority. Internationally China was viewed as a liability and foreign bondholders despaired of their investments. But in spite of floods, civil war and foreign aggression, in spite of the loss of Manchuria with its revenues, China progressed steadily in the ten years of peace granted to her. In 1937, when the war began, she was in a sounder financial position than she had been for quarter of a century.

The Government's first need was more revenue. In this it was greatly helped by acquiring fiscal autonomy after 1928. The old tariff rate which had been fixed by treaty at five per cent ad valorem was promptly scaled upwards with the result that the customs revenue was trebled. The next most

important source of China's revenue is the salt tax. In 1928 Mr. Soong, who was then Finance Minister, reorganised the administration of this tax so that in 1936 the total collected was more than double the maximum yearly amount collected under the former régime. This enabled the Nanking Government to abolish the worst of the old taxes which hampered internal trade between the provinces. Instead, the Government taxed certain commodities such as tobacco, alcohol, flour and cotton yarn. This commodities tax yielded 136 million Chinese dollars in 1936 as against 39 millions in 1929, and the total revenue from this, the customs and salt tax rose during those years from 369 millions to 666 millions.

The needs of the Government, however, were too urgent to be satisfied by the development of tax revenues alone and internal loans were successfully floated for the first time in China's history. At the same time the Government made a vigorous effort to meet the foreign loans almost all of which had fallen in arrears. These foreign loans fall into three distinct categories: loans secured on the Maritime customs; loans secured on the salt gabelle; and railway loans guaranteed by the Government. The service of the loans secured on the customs had never been interrupted. (The foreign Powers had taken good care to see that it should not be.) There was a temporary

default on the salt loans from 1927-30 but thanks to the reorganisation of the administration the annual sum required for the service of the Salt Loans was under 8 per cent of the total revenue in 1936. About 35 per cent of China's foreign obligations are Railway loans many of which had then been in partial or total default for many years. Soon the Nanking Government was able to settle many of these loans. By 1937, indeed, the total amount of unsettled claims was only about 10 per cent of China's total debt. This meant, of course, that foreign capital was once more available for China's reconstruction.

It is true, however, that the Nanking Government was not able to achieve this without difficulties. It incurred large deficits and each budget from 1931 to 1937 showed a surplus of expenditure over revenue rising in 1936 to 225 million Chinese dollars. But revenue was expanding, trade improving, and the country settling down. China's national debt in 1937 was about 4,500,000,000 Chinese dollars but this represented less than 10 dollars per head of the population. The final achievement was the reform of the old silver currency in 1935 with British and American help. It had long been recognised that China was at a disadvantage in adhering to the silver standard while the rest of the world maintained the gold standard. This disadvantage was accentuated after the depression of 1931 when

British, American and Japanese devaluation of their currencies increased the depression in China. The price of silver rose, which amounted to the same thing as a fall in the level of prices quoted in silver. The drain of silver from China to foreign countries and especially to the United States forced the Government to contract credit which inevitably caused stagnation of business activity and consequent unemployment. In 1934 the Government was forced to restrict the export of silver but smuggling continued and this could obviously be no more than a temporary measure. Finally on November 3, 1935, the Government stabilised the dollar at an agreed level, nationalised all silver, and announced that only notes of the Central Bank of China, the Bank of China and the Bank of Communications would be legal tender. This reform, assisted by the British and American Governments and approved by Sir Frederick Leith Ross, the British financial adviser, who was in China at the time, was a conspicuous success. From November, 1935, until the beginning of the war exchange enjoyed a stability unusual in China and the currency system thus introduced commanded confidence both at home and abroad. Thanks to this, moreover, Chinese finances have stood up remarkably well under the strain of war. The customs revenue has fallen almost to nothing owing to the Japanese occupation of the main ports but the currency has been main-

tained at a stable level and China has been able to buy considerable supplies of arms and munitions if considerably less than she requires. It says much for the success of the Nanking Government that the British Government has even seriously considered the possibility of a loan to China while she is engaged in war. Ten years ago no country would have lent money to a Chinese Government in peace time without the most stringent guarantees.

To supplement his material reforms General Chiang Kai-shek, like other dictators, has offered his people a mental or psychological tonic. This, called the New Life Movement, was originated in Kiangsi as an answer to the Communists. It is a curious mixture of old Chinese moral teachings and the more modern ones of the Y.M.C.A. While urging a revival of the four ancient virtues of etiquette, justice, integrity and conscientiousness, it also encourages the essentially Western virtues of "clean-living". It derives partly, no doubt, from Chiang's own curious personality influenced by his conversion to Christianity; it also reveals the influence of German and Italian Fascism. Whether it has had any real effect on the masses is difficult to say but officials (partly of necessity) have sometimes reformed their ways, wearing simple clothes, going without luxurious feasts, and forgetting their family interests for the public good. Its chief practical effect, indeed, has been

to check the traditional corruption of officials, a corruption which, as has been pointed out, really arises from a conflict of duties. The Chinese, unable to be loyal to their families and to the public at the same time, are inclined to put their families first. A cynic might remark on the curious chance that General Chiang, the first Chinese to denounce this deep-rooted custom, escaped this traditional dilemma by marrying Mayling Soong, a member of the richest family in China.

CHAPTER V

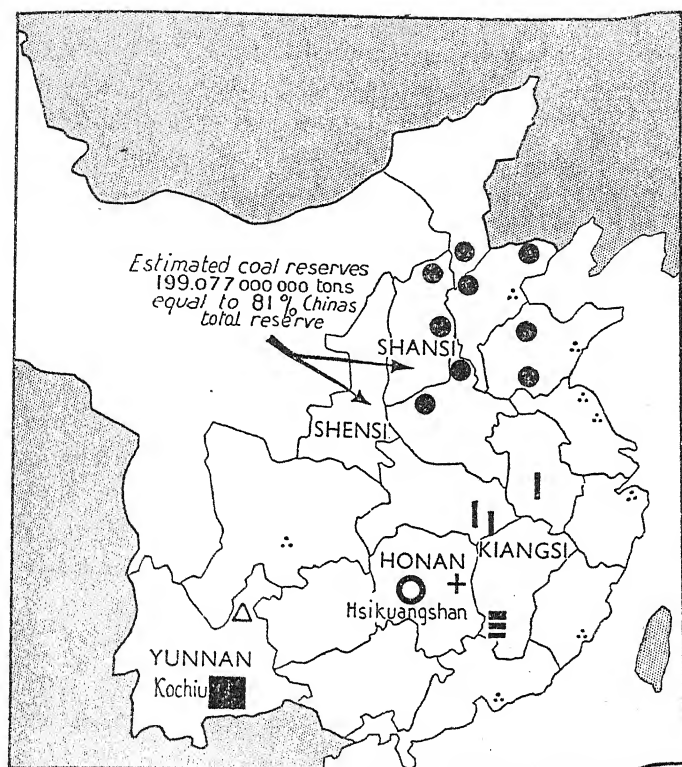
THE SHADOW OF JAPAN

SINCE the Meiji Restoration in 1868 Japan has devoted all her great energies to the task of imperialist expansion. No satisfactory explanation of this terrible phenomenon has yet been given and it is unlikely that any simple explanation will suffice, though Marxist historians, with their customary self-confidence, are prepared to offer their usual one. Much of it seems due to the desire to imitate the Western Powers which gave Japan her first rude lesson in modern politics; and though such language may be unscientific, it has always seemed true that Japan is suffering from an extreme form of inferiority complex. An expansionist movement was not altogether alien to the character of the Japanese people who had shown similar tendencies at earlier periods in their history and perhaps it was all the more violent when it came because their natural instincts had been artificially restrained for 200 years. The social structure of Japan also fitted well with such a policy for it left government in the hands of what was traditionally a warrior class—a class, moreover, which for long

had been deprived of an outlet for its energies except by the less satisfactory alternative of civil war.

Once she had decided to become a Great Power Japan was forced to undertake some form of imperialist expansion for strategic reasons. Like Britain she is an island empire on the edge of a great continent, but unlike Britain she cannot maintain her position without direct intervention on the continent. There is no balance of power in Asia. There might be, if Russia and China were equally strong, but this has never been true since Japan took her historic decision. So long as China is weak the natural dominant Power in Asia is Russia, and to curb the Russian power Japan has tried many devices. She has fought and defeated Russia in war without seriously affecting her might. She has tried to drive her back from the Pacific coast by seizing the territory along the seaboard but has only partially succeeded. She has even tried to create a balance of power by organising new States in Manchukuo, North China and Inner Mongolia, but this, too, has only partially succeeded. In the end she has realised that she can maintain her position in the Far East only if China becomes her ally or dependent and is prevented from becoming the ally or dependent of Russia. That is the strategic aim of the present war.

There are, of course, many other reasons. Japan desires to dominate and control China as Britain



MINERAL PRODUCTION

- | | | | |
|--------|------------|-------------|----------|
| ● Coal | ■ Tin | ≡ Tungsten | △ Copper |
| I Iron | ○ Antimony | + Manganese | ⋈ Salt |

18.

Shows the distribution of the main centres of mineral production in China from 1934-36

China produces: 63% of world production of Tungsten.
80% " " Antimony.
6% " " Tin.

dominates and controls India. She wishes to exploit the economic wealth of China in her interests, to sell her manufactured goods to the Chinese and to buy Chinese raw products to supply her factories. She has, in fact, all the many complex motives which have influenced all imperialist powers to go out and conquer but in Japan these are increased and intensified by psychological factors to a fierce and burning passion. No one knows what Japan ultimately hopes for. Her military spokesmen have declared half-secret hopes and plans to conquer first China, then Asia, then the world, but there is no reason why one should pay more attention to these outbursts than to the equally fantastic sayings of imperialists in Britain, France or Germany at various periods. It is true, however, that so long as the militarists rule Japan some attention must necessarily be given to their pronouncements. It is true, also, that up to the present these plans have been carried out with surprising consistency, as China knows to her cost.

When the first revolution broke out in China in 1911 Japan had already taken Formosa and Korea and had acquired extensive rights in Manchuria. Her future plans were clearly formulated in 1915 when the Japanese Government, taking advantage of the preoccupation of the other Powers in the world war, presented its famous Twenty-one Demands to Yuan Shih-kai, President of the Republican Govern-

ment in North China. These demands were grouped under five headings and the fifth included an astonishing series of "requests" which, if granted, would have at once given Japan a controlling influence in China. They were chiefly concerned with the appointment of Japanese advisers to important posts in the Chinese Government and with the joint administration of certain essential services. These demands, and the treaty which went with them, were actually accepted by Yuan Shih-kai but since his Government was not recognised as the lawful Government of China and since the Western Powers were soon free to give their attention to the Far East, they were never put into force. At the end of the war, indeed, China was released from nearly all the demands which remain only as a reminder of Japanese intentions.

The next ten years, when China was at her weakest, fortunately provided a respite. Even Japan shared to some extent the wave of idealism which swept the governments of the Great Powers in those days, and a series of more or less liberal governments acted with restraint and sympathy. The great Foreign Minister of those years was Baron Shidehara, according to Mr. Morgan Young (*Imperial Japan*), "the only modern statesman in Japan whose will and conscience bade him deal fairly with Japan and whom opportunity and courage enabled to do so". But this state of things was

too good to last. In May, 1927, the same year as the second revolution in China which established the Kuomintang in power in Nanking, the Government of which Baron Shidehara was Foreign Minister fell to be succeeded by the Government of Baron Tanaka; and Japan entered on a still more furious period of aggression and expansion which led to the present war.

In 1927 Japan was chiefly interested in Manchuria, and her first aim, as we have seen in a previous chapter, was to prevent the new Kuomintang Government from extending its power northwards. One of Baron Tanaka's first actions was to send troops to protect Japanese property and residents in the province of Shantung and to block the way to Peking. At the same time he announced that Japan "may possibly be constrained to take appropriate effective steps for the maintenance of peace and order in Manchuria" and that she would prevent "defeated troops or those in pursuit of them" from entering Manchuria. He urged the warlord of Manchuria, General Chang Tso-lin, "the Old Marshal", whose seat of Government was in Peking, to withdraw to Manchuria before it was too late. This the Old Marshal reluctantly did. On his way his train was blown up and he was murdered. The Old Marshal's son, Chang Hsueh-liang, at once came to terms with the Nanking Government, which confirmed his appointment as governor of the

Manchurian provinces, and hoisted the Kuomintang flag throughout the three North-eastern provinces. Such a blow to their plans could not easily be accepted by the Japanese and it is certain that from that moment the militarists determined that sooner or later they would take Manchuria by force. Three years later their plans were complete, and on September 18, 1931, without consulting the Government in Tokio, the Japanese army in Manchuria launched its invasion. By the end of 1932 the Japanese had virtual control over the three provinces; by May, 1933, they had added Jehol; and when hostilities ceased on May 31, 1933, by the signing of the Tangku Truce, the Japanese troops had crossed the Great Wall and were looking down on the fertile plains of North China. Why are the distant hills so blue and the best gold further on?

It is not the purpose of this book to discuss the invasion of Manchuria or its international repercussions. It will be sufficient to recount the main facts. The Nanking Government, helpless to resist by itself, appealed to the League of Nations. The League tried first to put a stop to military operations, then, when that had failed, to achieve some compromise acceptable to both sides, and finally, when that too had failed, contented itself by declaring the Japanese to have been in the wrong (which, indeed, was sufficiently obvious) and by refusing to recog-

nise the puppet State of Manchukuo which Japan had hastened to set up. The Great Powers acted throughout from a nicely proportioned mixture of prudence, cowardice and ignorance. It is true that neither Russia nor the United States, two of the Powers principally concerned, were then members of the League, but no steps were taken to find out what would be Russia's attitude in the event of League action and the United States Government (as Mr. Stimson, then its Secretary of State, has since revealed) was ready and anxious to give what help it could. The smaller Powers, which, under the able leadership of Dr. Benes of Czecho-Slovakia, realised better the importance of this test, exerted great pressure on Britain and France in vain. The British Government, whose delegate to Geneva had told the Council early in 1932 that "war in everything but name was being waged in the Far East" and that "His Majesty's Government could not tolerate this situation", showed that it could tolerate it with equanimity. No doubt Britain was then disarmed; her naval base at Singapore had not been completed; and she was in the trough of the great economic depression. No doubt if there had been war as the result of League action she would have had to bear the brunt of it. But no warlike action was contemplated or asked for and there is good reason to believe that economic sanctions would at that time (not later) have been

sufficient. Japan was not the confident, aggressive Power in 1932 that she is to-day. The British Government in those critical days revealed a timorous attitude, a narrow vision and a tendency to avoid facing facts which paved the way for the greater failure over Abyssinia four years later. In the Far East the results were disastrous; in Europe they led to Spain, Czecho-Slovakia and Munich.

During the Manchurian crisis there occurred a remarkable incident which had a profound effect on China. Anti-Japanese feeling had naturally increased in China and was particularly strong in Shanghai where the Chinese had to bear the arrogance of the Japanese inhabitants and, still worse, of the Japanese naval landing party which was permanently established there. In January, 1932, five Japanese were injured and one killed in a minor clash, and the Japanese Consul-General promptly presented a series of demands to the Chinese Mayor. Without waiting for the reply (which was declared to be satisfactory when it arrived) the Japanese naval forces took action and war very soon broke out in the suburbs of Chapei. This monstrous behaviour, which was somewhat reluctantly supported by the Japanese Government and army, had important results. It showed many Chinese, who otherwise had no means of knowing, what Japanese aggression meant. It showed the Nanking Govern-

ment that resistance was not as hopeless as it had thought, for some of the Chinese troops fought with great gallantry and the people as a whole showed an admirable spirit. And it should have showed the Japanese, though events proved that they failed to learn the lesson, that they had grossly underestimated the strength of the new China.

Eventually an armistice was signed and both sides withdrew their troops from Shanghai. For the next five years the struggle was fought out openly and secretly on the plains of North China. It was an extraordinary period. Japan set herself to disrupt China by threats, diplomacy and force; the Nanking Government sought to avoid disaster by apparent compliance and secret resistance. The Japanese militarists were determined to extend their influence in North China, as they had done over Manchuria; the Kuomintang relied on the tremendous power of the Nationalist movement among the masses of the people. There became established a regular pattern of events. An incident would occur somewhere in China—perhaps a Japanese journalist would be attacked by a mob. The Japanese Government would promptly present a series of extravagant demands to the Chinese Government and the Japanese army in Manchuria would move its troops ostentatiously down to the Great Wall. After a period of diplomatic negotiation the Chinese Government would carry out the

demands in order to save a possible clash but without actually "accepting" them. It would thus be free to reverse its action later.

During this period, also, the Japanese Government first formulated what became known as its "Asiatic Monroe Doctrine". On January 23, 1934, Mr. Hirota, then the Japanese Foreign Minister, announced in the Diet that "Japan, serving as the only corner-stone for the edifice of the peace of East Asia, bears the entire burden of responsibility". In April of the same year, Mr. Amau, the Foreign Office spokesman and Mr. Hirota's subordinate, startled the foreign correspondents in Tokio by stating that Japan would resent any interference in East Asia by other Powers, such as providing China with loans or war material, and that "we consider it only natural that to keep peace and order in East Asia we must act alone on our own responsibility". The first report of the Technical Delegate of the League of Nations on China's reconstruction was then about to be issued and the Japanese Government was afraid (alas ! without reason) that these recommendations would be followed by the grant of a reconstruction loan from Great Britain and the United States to the Nanking Government. Two years later Mr. Hirota, who had again become Foreign Minister, formulated a more discreet policy towards China known as "The Three Points". These were the

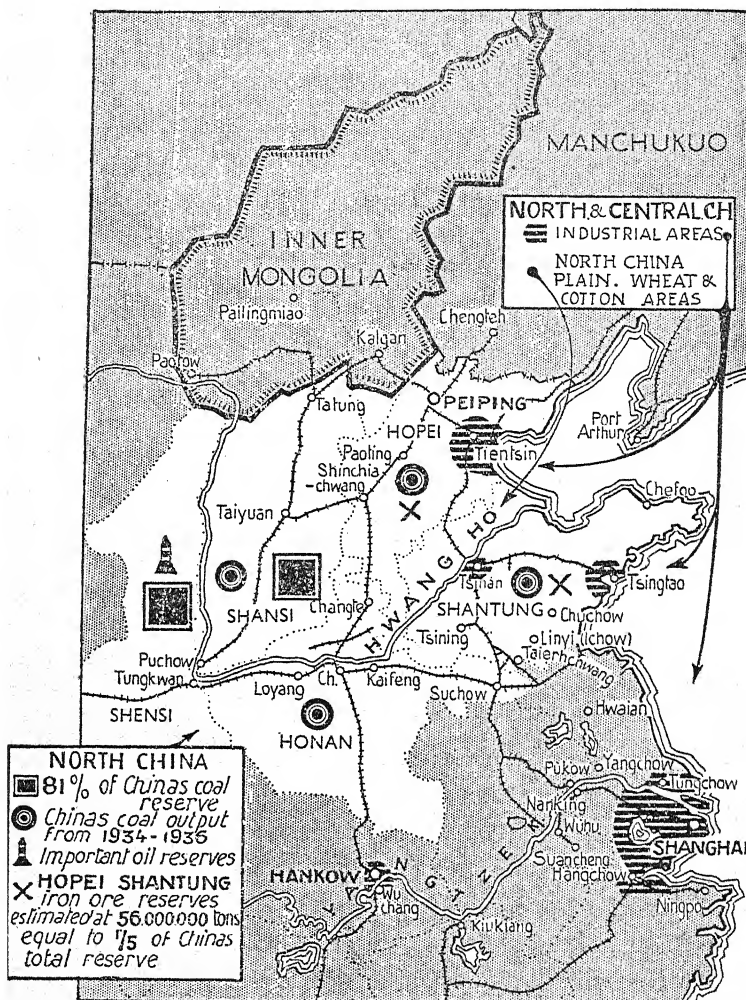
recognition of Manchukuo by China; the suppression of all Communist activities; and active collaboration with Japan. It was the last of these which mattered for it meant in practice that China was expected to do exactly what Japan demanded politically, economically and militarily. It was a direct echo of the fifth group of the famous Twenty-one Demands.

But, as so often in Japan, the official policy of the Government during that period was less important than the unofficial policy of the Japanese army in Manchuria (the Kwantung Army) and in North China. This was controlled by able officers like Colonel Doihara and Major Tada, intelligent if limited men who might in another age have been compared to such British "empire-builders" as Clive and Rhodes. Like them they enjoyed extraordinary freedom from civilian control so that they were able to use their own initiative and imagination with remarkable results. The chief aims of their policy were as follows: firstly, to drive a wedge between Russia and China by extending Japanese influence westwards through Inner Mongolia where they hoped to set up another puppet state as a counter to Russian-controlled Outer Mongolia; secondly, to detach North China from the Nanking Government through the agency of the Northern Generals and warlords; thirdly, to join North China and Manchukuo in one great

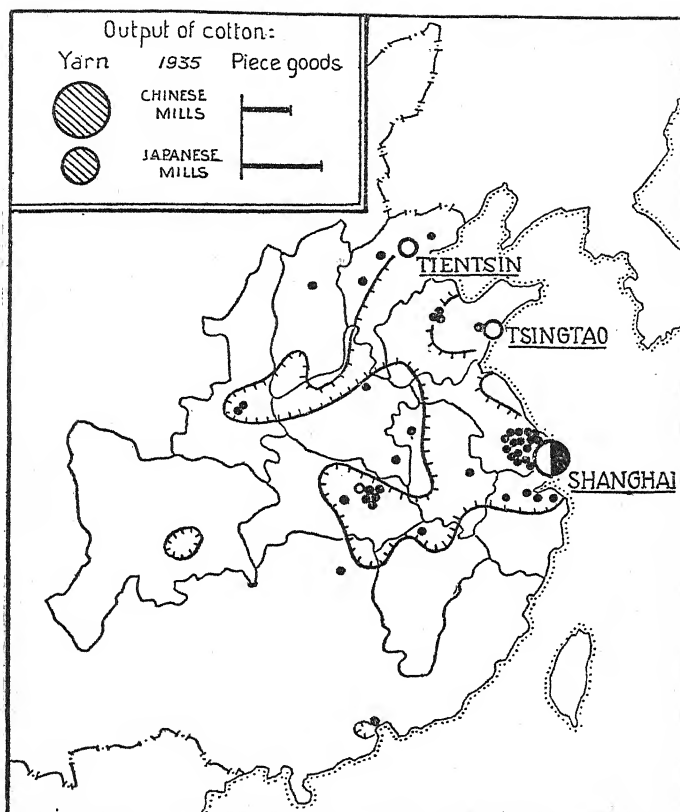
"economic block" which should be administered in the interests of Japan.

The economic importance of North China was clearly understood by the Japanese militarists and it is worth devoting some attention to this subject. The five provinces of Chahar, Hopei, Shantung, Shansi and Suiyuan occupy an area of 400,000 square miles or about one-tenth the total area of China. The great plain which stretches to the North of the Yellow river is one of the most fertile regions in the whole country, though Chahar and Suiyuan, the Mongolian provinces, are little cultivated and consist of bare and rolling hills. Though wheat, rice, millet and kaoliang are the principal crops, North China produces over 33 per cent of China's cotton (an important consideration for the Japanese) and 90 per cent of her wool. North China is also rich in minerals as can clearly be seen from the accompanying map. It produces no less than 70 per cent of China's coal, and 46 per cent of the total iron reserves in China are calculated to lie in Shansi. Its important position is also reflected in its trade. In 1935 the Tientsin customs produced about a quarter of the total customs revenue in China and the salt revenue is about the same proportion. It can fairly be said that without Manchuria and the five northern provinces China would not be a great Power.

The Japanese plans for North China were by no



19. ECONOMIC WEALTH OF NORTH CHINA



COTTON INDUSTRY

- Chinese mills
- Japanese mills
- ☁ Principal cotton growing areas

20.

The main centres of cotton industry are underlined.
To-day cotton industries in War areas are either inactive or have been destroyed.

means hopeless and the men who devised them by no means stupid. They showed, for instance, considerable skill and even genuine understanding in dealing with the Mongols who were for a long time deceived by their promises. But in North China they were too late. The fame of the new Government, the propaganda of the Kuomintang and the Communists had slowly seeped down to the level of the masses. The peasants would never again passively accept any rulers as being no worse and no better than the local officials and tax-collectors whom they had always regarded as their enemies. Some of the older generals, brought up in the bad old days of warlord rule, were prepared to consider Japanese proposals which might insure their power and prosperity, but the younger officers had been infected by the germ of patriotism and would not let them go too far. The students of Peking and Tientsin, the most educated and therefore the most politically conscious section of the people in North China, demonstrated against Japanese aggression and roused the ignorant or apathetic by their posters and processions.

Yet the Japanese policy came very near success. In September, 1935, General Tada and Colonel Doihara began to negotiate with the governors of the five northern provinces—Hopei, Shantung, Shansi, Chahar and Suiyuan—with a view to setting up an independent régime in North China. For a

moment it seemed that this daring and impudent plan would succeed, but this at last was too much. At the critical point General Chiang Kai-shek intervened, ordering the five governors to break off negotiations, and the whole scheme collapsed—or almost the whole scheme. The resourceful Doihara, after experiencing such bitter disappointment that he is said to have attempted to commit “hara-kiri”, managed to save something from the wreck. In November a small autonomous régime under a puppet ruler was organised in a strategic corner of East Hopei, and in December an Autonomous Political Council was set up in the provinces of Hopei and Chahar. Indeed, when the year 1936 began, it seemed that the Japanese flood was still rising, but in fact the tide had turned. In 1936 General Chiang Kai-Shek completed his great task of uniting China under one Government.

The “Autonomous Council of East Hopei” in particular proved useful to the Japanese in two of their most disreputable schemes for weakening and disrupting China: the drug traffic and the “special trade” or smuggling. To avoid the high tariff placed on all imports at Chinese ports Japanese traders began to smuggle goods into China through East Hopei. At first these smuggled goods were generally brought from Manchukuo by rail, but later sampans and even small steamers came openly to the coast where their cargoes were unladen on

the shore. As a man told a journalist who went to inquire into this situation: "You can't call it smuggling any more. I saw 38 vessels of all sorts and sizes lying out in the bay, discharging cargo into dozens of sampans, and the beach as busy as the Bund in Tientsin at the height of the shipping season. That's free trade. It is not even a free port but a free coast nowadays." The Chinese customs and officials dared do nothing to stop the smuggling. Most of those engaged in it were either Japanese or Koreans enjoying the rights of extraterritoriality. They were also the worst type of adventurers and toughs, well armed and ready for a fight. If by any chance a Chinese policeman tried to interfere he would be assaulted and, more likely than not, the Japanese military authorities, who protected the smugglers openly, would protest to the Chinese Government against the use of arms in a demilitarised zone! As the trade flourished, the smugglers grew bolder still. A Russian engaged in the "special trade" was asked if there was any limit to the amount of goods he could bring in. "No limit at all," he replied. "I will bring anything you want, anything except, perhaps, an elephant." On more than one occasion the smugglers commandeered a passenger train to take their goods to Tientsin, turning out the Chinese passengers and overloading the carriages so badly that once the train actually broke down. The trade only slackened

when the markets in Tientsin and other distributing centres became saturated with smuggled goods.

This naturally had a serious effect on the Chinese Government's revenue—and also on foreign competitors who continued to pay the proper duties. When the smuggling was at its height in the early months of 1936 it was reckoned that duty was being lost at the rate of about 2,000,000 Chinese dollars a week. In a year the Chinese Government must have lost more than 50,000,000 dollars in revenue.

But not even the smuggling reflects such discredit on the Japanese as the drug traffic which always accompanies their advance in China. The trade which follows the Japanese flag most closely is illicit. The Japanese militarists encourage the traffickers because the sale of drugs yields the quickest return after invasion and war and because addiction to drugs weakens the health and character of the Chinese people. One of the Nanking Government's social reforms was an attempt (only partially successful) to stamp out the smoking of opium in China. But the Chinese people are used to opium and understand its use; the Japanese sell them the far more pernicious extracts of opium: heroin and morphine. Opium is grown extensively in Jehol and the southern provinces of Manchukuo under Japanese rule. Before the war it was distributed from the Japanese concessions in Tientsin

and Peking which rapidly became the centre of the world's drug traffic. The appalling conditions have been revealed to the League of Nations Advisory Committee by Miss Muriel Lester who has described the streets in Tientsin where every other shop is a "drug joint". Since the war began this trade has spread shamelessly. Chemists and clinics sell heroin as "cures" for diseases and when the patient comes back uncured he is given more so that he becomes an addict. Pedlars travel through the countryside selling heroin at fairs and markets, accompanied by gangs of bullies who protect them and threaten those Chinese courageous enough to interfere. Not even the bombing of Canton or the sack of Nanking were more terrible crimes than this campaign to poison a people for gain.

The year 1936 began ominously for the Chinese Government. There were many who felt that it was time to take a stand against Japan and who were uneasy at the Government's policy of concessions. There were student demonstrations in Nanking and Hankow. The Communists reappeared in the North-west unaffected by the strain of the Long March and began to spread eastwards across the Yellow River. In June a more serious crisis arose when the military commanders of the southern provinces of Kwangtung and Kwangsi began to organise a rebellion. Though their motives were probably self-seeking, they were clever enough to

take advantage of the anti-Japanese feeling which was strong in Canton and the South. The Kuomintang South-western Committee and the South-west Political Council, neither of which recognised the authority of the Nanking Government, ordered troops to march north under the flag of the "People's Anti-Japanese Salvation Army" but were stopped on the borders of Kwangsi by General Chiang's own army. The movement collapsed; and the Nanking Government extended its control over the two dissident provinces. But Chiang was astute enough to see which way the wind was blowing and that, if he was to preserve his own position, he must adopt an anti-Japanese policy no matter what were the risks. In October the governor of Suiyuan rubbed in the lesson by vigorously repelling an invasion by Mongolian and Manchukuan troops (inspired by the Japanese) without the sanction or support of the Central Government. The wind was rising.

But the final decision was forced upon Chiang by the Sianfu incident in December. To keep the Communists penned in their mountain refuge in far-off Shensi, General Chiang had sent Chang Hsueh-liang, the Young Marshal, as "Pacification Commissioner" with his own army of Manchurian troops. These men, however, who had been driven out of Manchuria by the Japanese four years earlier and who longed passionately for revenge, had no

wish to fight the Communists who were then preaching the gospel of the united front against Japan. Instead the two armies fraternised and Sian became a centre of the anti-Japanese movement to which students flocked for military training. This situation was not unknown to the Nanking Government and became so open a scandal that General Chiang could no longer ignore it. In December, therefore, taking only his personal staff, he flew to Sian to demand an explanation. The situation, however, had developed faster than had been expected. The Young Marshal's Manchurian troops, the Communists and some of the provincial troops in Shansi were now in close contact and the movement was bordering on rebellion. When the Young Marshal discovered that Chiang was still as obstinate as ever in his determination to crush the Communists and to avoid war with the Japanese, rebellion broke out.

Several of Chiang's staff were killed and Chiang himself, who tried to escape over a snow-covered mountain, was captured and held prisoner. The question was what to do with him. There were without doubt a number of the more short sighted and fanatical officers who wished to kill him there and then. Others were ready to kill him if he refused to listen to reason. The Young Marshal, however, whose character is of great interest, and the Communist leaders, who had arrived in

Sian, thought better. They did their best to persuade the Generalissimo by argument and solitary confinement, but they realised that, no matter what happened, it would do no good to kill the one man in China who could pretend to command the nation's loyalty. The chief danger to his life came from less intelligent or more unscrupulous members of the Nanking Government who wanted to send out a punitive expedition against the rebels without delay. If they had done so the Generalissimo's life would have been worth little. Fortunately they were persuaded against this folly by General Chiang's wife, his personal adviser, Mr. Donald, and his brother-in-law, T. V. Soong. These three with great courage (for they could not know the real situation) at once flew to Sian and negotiated with the rebels.

What actually happened in the arguments which went on interminably in Sian no one knows. According to General Chiang's own account, which deserves to be read, he refused to give in and made no promise of any kind. This, indeed, may well have been the truth and it is quite possible that when the leaders of this strange rebellion finally permitted Chiang to fly back to Nanking, a free man, they believed that they had failed. But the experience had its effect. Having saved his face (and proved, incidentally, his high personal courage), Chiang slowly and imperceptibly began to change his policy. The Kuomintang congress continued to

denounce the Communists and oppose the United Front, but it was noticeable that the campaign against the Communists had been quietly called off. In return the Communists abandoned their anti-government propaganda and some of their most revolutionary doctrines and concentrated instead on the necessity of united action against Japan.

The Japanese military commanders in Manchuria and North China, watching anxiously while this curious comedy was played, were not slow to realise its true significance. They realised that their policy of peaceful disruption, so nearly successful, had after all failed. They saw China stronger than she had ever been, united under a Government which could truly claim to represent the people, ruled by a man of outstanding ability, on good terms with the Western Powers. There were no civil wars to exploit, no warlords to bribe and encourage. Instead of an ancient civilisation decaying they saw a nation in the making. They did not hesitate. (We may give them the credit for their ruthlessness, for they will get no other.) They decided that the time had come to strike, and struck.

CHAPTER VI

THE HAND OF THE INVADER

ON the night of July 7, 1937, some Japanese soldiers engaged in manœuvres near Peking exchanged shots with Chinese troops garrisoned at the little town of Lukouchiao. The versions offered by the two sides are, of course, quite different and even contradictory, nor is it likely that the exact truth will ever be known. It is more interesting to speculate whether the Japanese "staged" this incident as everyone believes them to have "staged" the incident which led to the invasion of Manchuria. But even this question is, perhaps, less important than might be thought. For it is quite certain that the Japanese militarists were looking for some such incident and that the Japanese Government at once took steps to expand it into a "casus belli". On July 11, for instance, the Japanese Government ordered its consular officials in China to instruct Japanese nationals to prepare for evacuation "in the event of serious developments"; at the same time the Foreign Office announced that the Cabinet had decided "to take all necessary measures for dispatching military forces to North China", and on

that day 2,000 Japanese troops arrived in Tientsin from Manchuria.

Negotiations with the Chinese officials in North China continued until July 28, interspersed by more "incidents" and clashes between the troops of both sides, but it never seemed as if the Japanese Government had any intention of accepting a peaceful solution. The delay between the first incident and the start of major operations on July 28 merely gave the Japanese time to bring up sufficient troops and supplies for the invasion. There is, however, still a genuine doubt as to whether the Japanese Government hoped to restrict the war to North China or whether it even then realised that a general war between the two nations was inevitable. Nor is it certain that the Government was in complete agreement with the Army and Navy or they with each other.

On the Chinese side there was at first some hesitation and indecision. In North China especially there was a strong party in favour of compromise led by General Sung Cheh-yuan, chairman of the Autonomous Council of Hopei and Chahar. But the nation as a whole, as represented by the Nanking Government, seemed to realise that the time had at last come when no more concessions were possible. The indecision of the generals in North China had one disastrous result: the Chinese troops in the North, deprived of leadership, not knowing the

truth and torn between patriotism and loyalty to their officers, were caught unprepared and swept aside by the Japanese army when the invasion began. As a result the whole defence of North China was unbalanced and two provinces lost almost before the war had properly begun.

If there existed any doubts that the war would spread to other parts of China they were soon dispelled. The tense atmosphere in Shanghai soon produced the requisite "incident" and the Japanese navy, not to be outdone, made the most of it. It is just possible that a serious clash might have been averted for a few weeks at least and quite probable that the Japanese would have preferred such a delay while they were still occupied in North China; but the recklessness of the Japanese naval landing party and the resolution of the Chinese Government left no room for compromise. On August 13 hostilities were in full swing on land on sea and in the air round Shanghai. The Japanese naval force paid dearly for its impulsive action and was nearly annihilated before the army (a little reluctantly it seemed) sent reinforcements to rescue it from its plight. By then the Chinese troops, massed in a narrow area and strongly entrenched, had the upper hand, and it was not until October that the Japanese began to make any real headway. This effort cost the Japanese thousands of pounds and thousands of lives. The Chinese suffered even

heavier losses which could hardly be justified on military grounds, but their heroic resistance roused the whole nation and put an end to the last thoughts of compromise or surrender. If, as some say, it was the Chinese Government which forced the Japanese to fight at Shanghai against their will, it was a brilliant stroke of strategy.

In the past China's enemies and conquerors had always come by one of two ways. If they were land powers like the Mongols and Manchus, they poured down into the great Northern plains through the gap in the mountain circle, that gap so pitifully protected by the artificial barrier of the Great Wall. If they were sea powers, like Britain and the imperialist nations of the West, they came up China's great rivers, the Yantze, the Hwang-ho and the Si-kiang, the three gateways which lead into the interior. This time the Japanese invaders chose both ways. Their army descended from Manchuria to Peking and Tientsin from which it spread all over North China following the tracks of the few railways that existed. Their navy landed troops at Shanghai, pushed on up the Yangtze and dominated the long coast-line. To these two traditional methods they added yet a third—the attack from the air. The Japanese aircraft flew inland from the coast bombing crowded cities like Canton and Hankow and peaceful villages in the countryside. They attacked the seat of government, the railways, the

power stations and other so-called military objectives and spread terror and destruction among the civilian population too numerous and enduring to reach by other means. It is not easy to say what effect these methods have had. Hundreds and thousands have been killed and thousands more maimed and wounded but the people have not been demoralised. On the contrary the hum of the Japanese aeroplanes as they come over high up in the empty sky has taught the Chinese masses quicker than any propaganda what the war means. The simplest peasant can understand the bomb which in one moment annihilates his family, his house and livestock, the work of time, the heritage of ages. The Japanese bombers have also played their part in the struggle for Chinese unity.

If this is true of the Japanese air raids it is still more true of the Japanese atrocities in Nanking and other captured towns. In all wars there are atrocities and in all modern wars there are stories of atrocities; truth and falsehood are hopelessly intermingled. But in China there have been witnesses—British and American missionaries, business men and journalists who could not or would not leave the threatened towns. Their evidence cannot be questioned and has even been admitted by the more responsible Japanese. It may best be found in documentary form in a book edited by Mr. Timperley (*What War Means: The Japanese Terror in China*)

which should be read by all who wish to know and understand what has happened in China. I do not intend to recount here the endless tale of rape, murder and looting, of senseless cruelty and undisciplined licence, but merely to suggest its effect on the Chinese people. The Chinese themselves are callous to suffering and inclined to cruelty but they are also, on the whole, a kindly and virtuous people with strict standards of moral behaviour. It is impossible to exaggerate the effect of the Japanese atrocities on those who suffered them or heard of them. Refugees, fleeing from the towns, arrived in villages in the country or deeper into the interior, telling what they had suffered, rousing deep anger in the hearts of their audience, stiffening their determination to resist. In this way, through pain and anguish, a nation is being born.

In all wars strategy must ultimately be governed by policy and this is no less true of the present war in China. In this case, however, understanding is made more difficult by the fact that the Japanese have been forced to change their policy (and with it their strategy) since the war began. Their original intention, it seems, was to annex the five northern provinces outright or at least to set up there an independent state subservient to Japan. At the same time they imagined that a blockade of the coast and an attack on Shanghai would be sufficient to cause the collapse of the Nanking Government which

would then be replaced by one more amenable to "persuasion by force". The Japanese campaign, therefore, was at first divided into two parts. While their army in the North overran the five northern provinces as far south as the Yellow River and as far west as the borders of Mongolia, their army in Central China slowly drove out the Chinese from Shanghai. But before this task was completed in November, 1937, it was already obvious that the war could not be limited to North China and that the Nanking Government was in no danger of collapse. Instead the Chinese nation had achieved a unity unknown before and there were no signs of weakness or dissension.

The Japanese then decided that the war could only be ended by the final destruction of the Nanking Government and its substitution by one or more governments which would obey Japan's commands. No sooner, therefore, had the army in Central China finally driven the Chinese out of Shanghai on November 12, 1937, than it was ordered to advance up the Yangtze on Nanking, the capital of the Chinese Government. Surely when Nanking had fallen, they said, the Government would fall with it. Exactly one month later the first Japanese troops entered Nanking hard on the heels of the weary and mutilated Chinese divisions. They were left to loot and rape while the Government waited confidently for the expected surrender. But nothing happened.

Thoroughly disconcerted, the Japanese prepared to change their plans again. They were further worried by the news from North China where the army was now having serious difficulties in holding down the conquered country. It had found that it was one thing to advance swiftly along the few railways and another to maintain its positions. In China the "United Front" was working well. The famous Red Army, now loyal and respectable under the name of the 8th Route Army, but having lost none of its skill at guerilla warfare, was harassing the tenuous Japanese communications in the mountainous province of Shansi which had to be conquered and reconquered almost every month. Moreover Communist agitators, slipping through the Chinese lines, were rousing and arming the peasants in the occupied areas. No Japanese dared go three miles away from the railways without a strong military escort.

The truth is that in refusing to recognise the National Government of China, Japan set herself a political problem for which there was no solution. To chastise the Kuomintang was one thing; to eliminate it was another. By choosing the second course the Japanese committed themselves to the establishment in China not only of a new government but of a new political theory and a new civil service. It was an impossible task. They were not able to rely, as they had expected, on a powerful

pro-Japanese party in China. The handful of venal old men whom they found to man their puppet governments had neither the ability nor the prestige to rule successfully. Worse still, the masses of the people were no longer apathetic and indifferent but conscious of their nationality. The Japanese blundered again in their propaganda. The chief aims of this, as a correspondent wrote from North China (The *Manchester Guardian*, June 23, 1938), were "to pursue a holy war against Communism in a country which had nothing to fear from it and against a people who, if forced to choose, would certainly prefer Communism to Japan; to eliminate 'anti-Japanese feeling' while doing everything to create it; and, most serious of all, to destroy the first Government which can claim to have united China since the Revolution."

The Japanese were therefore driven to adopt a new and far-reaching policy: if they could not control China, they would conquer it; if they could not rule the Chinese by propaganda, they would do so with bayonets. This new policy at least had the merit that it suited the methods of the military. The army and navy set themselves to destroy this new nation utterly since they could not disrupt it. While they killed and slaughtered soldiers and civilians without distinction, they also destroyed their fields and factories, the means of their livelihood.

But the first step was to unite the two puppet

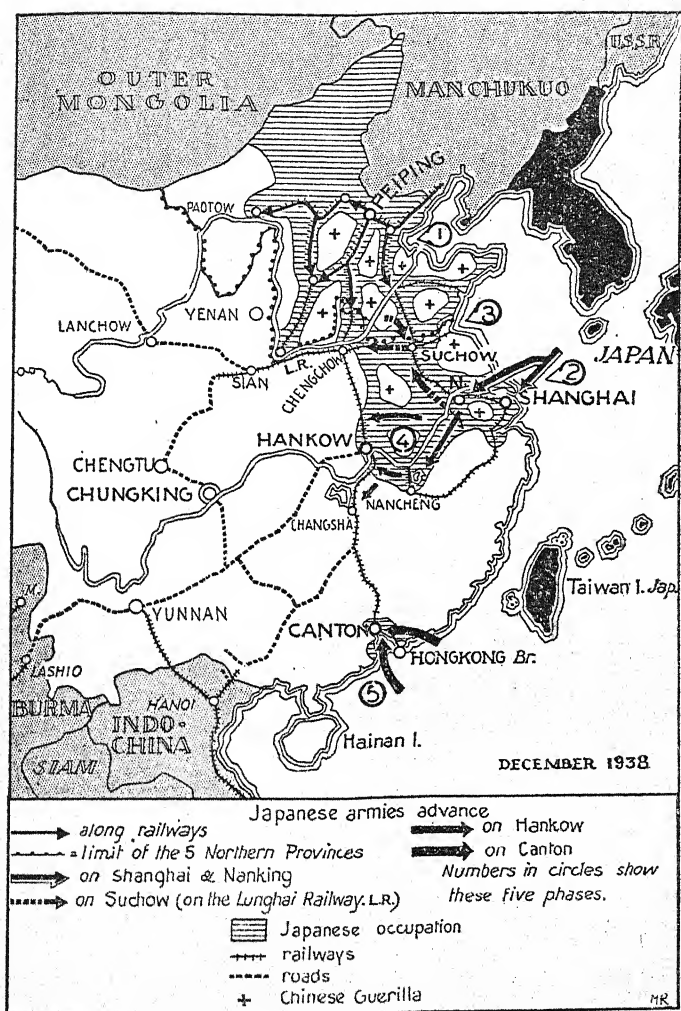
governments in North and Central China, and then to advance on Hankow to which the Government had retreated from Nanking. The army in the North and the army in Nanking began slowly to advance towards each other along the railway from Tientsin to Pukow (Nanking) hoping to meet at Suchow, an important junction where this railway was crossed at right angles by the Lunghai railway running from east to west. In this, however, the Japanese Staff as usual underestimated the difficulties. Led by the famous Kwangsi generals, Li Tsung-jen and Pai Chung-hsi, who only a year before had been in rebellion against the Nanking Government, the Chinese army in south Shantung showed great resolution and (what was more surprising) considerable strategic skill. Advancing too quickly along the single railway which could not support the strain of an invading army, one Japanese division was cut off from its base and routed by the Chinese at Taierchwang. It was the first victory gained by the new Chinese army in the open field and the whole of China rejoiced at the news. More prudent, the Japanese waited until reinforcements had arrived when they again advanced slowly. The Japanese Staff, which is trained on German textbooks, is obsessed by the strategy of encirclement. The battles they are taught to admire are Cannae, Sedan and, in particular, Tannenberg, in all of which a decisive victory was won by these means. This time they

were so certain that they had trapped the Chinese army at Suchow that Japanese war correspondents (an exuberant body of men) were allowed to describe the magnitude of the victory (in advance) to the Japanese public. This time, they said, the Chinese army would be finally crushed. Once again, however, they were wrong. The main Chinese divisions withdrew in plenty of time as they had withdrawn from Shanghai and Nanking, leaving some unfortunate provincial troops to bear the brunt of the Japanese attack. Even of these, however, the majority escaped through the thinly held Japanese lines to the west.

There was nothing left for the Japanese to do but to go after them. The plan was for the army in the North to advance west along the Lung-ha railway and then south to Hankow while the army in Central China moved slowly up the Yangtze valley supported by the navy. At first all went well. The Japanese motorised divisions moved swiftly westwards (sometimes too swiftly as the adventurous Colonel Doihara, now engaged in what might be called experiments in applied imperialism, discovered). Once again the Chinese seemed to be in desperate straits. This time, however, they found a new ally. Exceptionally heavy summer rains had raised the level of the Yellow River to a dangerous height. It seemed likely that there would inevitably be serious floods since the work of repairing the dykes had been neglected owing to the war. The

Chinese, on the advice either of the Communists or the German military advisers, decided to take advantage of this danger. They therefore destroyed the dykes on purpose and let the yellow flood waters pour southwards through the gap. Hundreds of miles were inundated; thousands of farmers drowned or ruined; but the Japanese army was halted. The advance on Hankow from the North was no longer possible.

Baulked again, the Japanese were forced to concentrate all their energies on the advance up the Yangtze. Here the floods aided them to a certain extent by weakening the booms laid down by the Chinese to bar the way and sweeping the river clear of mines. The height of the flood water also enabled large ships to go at least as far as Hankow. They also enjoyed one great advantage which they had not had elsewhere: a sound line of communication. Instead of rickety railways wandering through the countryside which could be mined and torn up by raiding guerillas, they had a mighty river, a mile wide and 40 feet deep which flowed steadily down to the sea at 7 miles an hour. One may cut a railway but one cannot cut the second greatest river in the world. Destroyers and gunboats went ahead, shelling the Chinese forts and emplacements on the banks. Behind the gunboats came motor launches carrying troops which could be landed at any point on the shore to outflank the Chinese positions.



Behind them again came tugs towing long strings of barges laden with supplies and munitions. It was a demonstration of naval power in the heart of a continent.

But before Hankow fell the whole aspect of the war had been changed by a fresh and unexpected blow—unexpected, at least, both in its speed and success. From the start of the war a strong party in Japan had clamoured for an expedition against Canton. It was led by the naval chiefs who were jealous of the army's triumphs on the northern mainland and longed for an opportunity to show their mettle. It was supported by that not inconsiderable section of the population, including many of the younger officers in both army and navy, which regards the British Empire with hatred and contempt and seeks any opportunity to do injury to British interests. But the chief argument of the party was that only an attack on Canton could cut off the stream of supplies and munitions which poured into China along the railway from Hong Kong to Canton and so to Hankow.

Until September, 1938, however, this daring project had been opposed by the army chiefs, who were not anxious to throw yet a third army on a hostile coast while one was clinging desperately to the towns and railways of North China and another was still struggling up the Yangtze valley, hundreds of miles from the sea. It was also opposed by those

wiser and more cautious statesmen who feared the power of the British Empire and believed that any threat to Hong Kong would assuredly arouse opposition.

The arguments which finally decided in favour of an attack on Canton are not known but may, perhaps, be guessed. During September the advance on Hankow dragged slower and slower, losing all the momentum with which it had started. Any diversion must have seemed welcome both to the harassed army commanders and the Government in Tokio with its eye on public opinion. In September, moreover, the great crisis was swelling in Europe, and as each day passed it seemed more likely that Britain, France and possibly Russia would be involved in war. General Ugaki, who was acting as Foreign Minister and who led the more moderate and elder group of statesmen, could no longer resist the rising tide and resigned his office. Plans for the expedition must have been prepared. But before the agreed date came and on the very day that Ugaki resigned, the European crisis burst—and there was no war. Did the Japanese commanders hesitate? We do not know. It seems just as likely that they concluded that since Britain and France would not fight for Czecho-Slovakia they would not or could not fight for the interests in South China. At the beginning of October the expedition sailed, and on October 12 some 40,000 men landed at Bias Bay just

to the north of Hong Kong under the guns of the Japanese fleet.

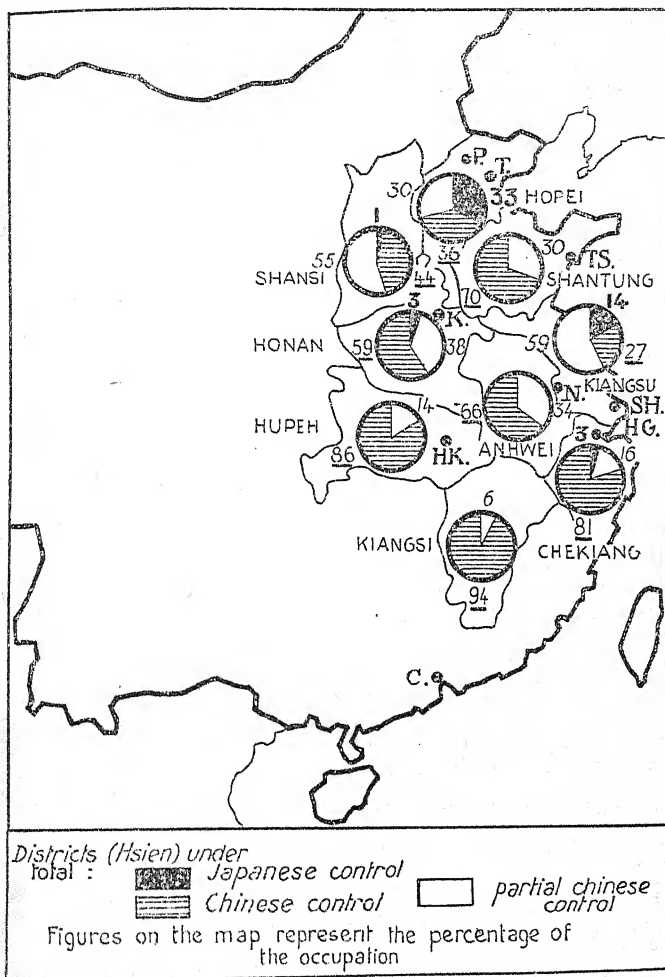
This was, on the face of it, a hazardous adventure. The expeditionary force had no foothold on the mainland and no base nearer than the island of Formosa, too far to be of much service. The province of Kwantung, against which the attack was directed, had been little touched by the war and was known to have a large and efficient army. Its commander, General Pai Chung-hsi, was the ablest in China. The civilian population was politically conscious and eager for the war. Foreign correspondents, when they heard the news of the landing, did not hesitate to describe it as "disastrous" and "doomed to failure". Yet from the first the expedition met with success. Though the Kwantung authorities had long expected an attack, and though Bias Bay was the obvious place for a landing, the invaders met with no resistance. The Japanese landing party splashed in through the shallow water from the boats without hearing the sound of a rifle shot. It is true that the coast here is flat and exposed and could be commanded by the naval guns of the Japanese fleet, yet even this advantage could hardly have counterbalanced the notorious military difficulties of landing an army on a hostile coast. It was then said that the Chinese had prepared defence lines in the hills, but when the Japanese pushed inland they met no great resistance.

What had happened ? Was it treachery or merely inefficiency ? No one knows, and since in the Chinese army commanders are executed for both, we can draw no definite conclusions from the fate of the officer in charge of the defence who was court-martialled and shot. Treachery may have played its part but it seems more likely that slackness and overconfidence did more. There had been so many reports of landings that possibly the Kwantung authorities did not believe the news when it came. The High Command, away in Hankow, had withdrawn the main divisions of the Kwantung army with its commander, relying, perhaps, too much on the protection of the British Empire at Kong Hong. Reinforcements were hurried south, but too late. When they arrived the Japanese mobile columns, moving with great speed, had passed the only possible line of defence and Canton had been evacuated. The railway had already been cut and the river blocked. The Chinese wisely decided not to fight for what had already been lost. Once again speed and audacity had paid.

The blow was so sudden and overwhelming that it crippled the defenders of Hankow. Within a day of receiving the news the retreat had begun and a few days later the Japanese gunboats were steaming past the Bund at Hankow. General Chiang Kai-Shek and his army retired into the West, a dispirited if undefeated nation.

In this way, within the space of a fortnight, the whole aspect of the war changed. On the face of it the Japanese were everywhere victorious. They controlled all the great cities, the main rivers, ports and railways. The Chinese were cut off from the sea, locked in their own hinterland, divided from each other without roads or railways. They had lost, with Canton, their main road to the outer world and with it the last of their customs revenues.

Yet in spite of the apparent Japanese successes and the grave handicaps from which she suffers, China's prospects in the war are by no means hopeless. The Japanese have shown that they can win victories and capture cities but they have not yet been able to hold down the countryside. The Chinese have shown no great strategic skill, but their guerilla warfare, especially when practised by the Communists of the 8th Route Army, has proved a more serious threat than the Japanese care to admit. More than a year after the war began, sporadic fighting still continues within earshot of Peking and Shanghai. The railways on which the invaders are so dependent are frequently cut by raiding parties and sometimes interrupted for days on end. A few miles on each side of the railways the Chinese still hold the countryside, and Chinese officials still administer the villages as though they had never heard (as perhaps they have not) of the puppet



22. THE WAR POSITION, DECEMBER 1938

governments set up by the Japanese. Whether this guerilla warfare will ever prove sufficient to drive out the Japanese or even to exhaust them over a period of years is hard to say. It is only really effective where organised by the Communists and where the peasant masses themselves are armed, trained and mobilised. So far the Kuomintang Government has tended to resist such measures, either doubting their efficacy or fearing the people more than the Japanese.

The character of the war must change inevitably now that Canton and Hankow have fallen. The eastern part of China has been divided in two parts, for west of Hankow no railway and few roads connect the North and South and the Japanese control 600 miles of the Yangtze. The Chinese Government must decide whether to withdraw still further west into the province of Szechwan and seek to maintain a precarious balance between the two halves or to concentrate on the defence of the South, leaving the North and West to the Chinese Communists. But there seems no danger that China's new-found unity will collapse or that resistance will slacken. On the contrary, the further the Japanese penetrate, the greater will be their difficulties multiplied by their own success. The Japanese have long given up hope of a short war and General Ugaki, when Foreign Minister, even suggested ten years as a possible period. There may, indeed, be

ten years of fighting, but victory will not lie at the end of it. The Japanese have set out to conquer a great nation living in a vast continent without either the men or the money to do it; and they have ignored the lesson of history that imperialism is only successful when practised on backward peoples.

But if the Chinese can look forward to the future with some confidence it must be tinged with despair. Whatever happens their country will have been desolated. The industries so laboriously built up in the last ten years have been ruined. In many districts the crops rot unharvested; next year the fields will lie untilled. The Yellow River sprawls across the Northern plain no longer bound by its earthen dykes. Cholera and dysentery, smallpox and typhoid all rage in the crowded cities. The work of reconstruction is undone. There are, no doubt, some compensations. The fearful loss of life which so appals foreign onlookers may in the end mean a period of peace and prosperity to the countryside. The retreat of the Government westwards into the interior has brought with it learning and industries to forgotten places. Like the scholars who spread across Europe during the Renaissance, teachers and students in Chinese universities are travelling inland bringing with them the benefits of education. The balance of China may be restored.

What changes the war will cause in the political

and social structure of China no one can yet say. The most obvious effect has been to deprive the wealthy bourgeoisie of the cities of their influence, for they have lost both their wealth and their cities. But the great class of landed gentry is still strongly represented in General Chiang's own army and by the powerful Kwangsi leaders, Generals Li Tsung-jen and Pai Chung-hsi. The Communists have increased their prestige both because of their influence with the peasant masses and still more by their resourceful energy in the prosecution of the war. As in Spain, so in China the Communists, whatever their failings, have shown themselves to be the most resolute party in time of crisis. The great body of students, always an important factor in Chinese politics because of the respect universally paid to learning, may be more powerful than ever as a result of their contacts with the people and the army. But at the bottom will remain as always the millions of peasants and small farmers who are China. It is they who have fought in the army, for the students and bourgeoisie have not shown any great anxiety to volunteer. It is they who have held up the Japanese invaders, enduring with equal courage the assaults of bombs, high explosive, tanks and machine guns. Thousands and thousands of them have been killed, partly from necessity but partly owing to the callousness and sometimes to the inefficiency of their officers. (One commander said

that he was satisfied if they killed one Japanese for the loss of five Chinese and that "they had been able to do that everywhere".) Thousands more have died of wounds owing to the corruption and inefficiency of the army medical service; few of those badly wounded ever reach a hospital of any kind; of those who do, the majority is infected by disease. It is difficult, sometimes, to understand why they continue to endure so patiently and to fight so bravely. They have a deep consciousness of race and they are beginning to be conscious of nation and state. Soon, perhaps, they may even be conscious of their power. They are bound to the land and when they leave their villages reluctantly (often when the enemy is but one valley away) they are filled with a determination to recover what they have lost. Whatever form the new China may take, so long as it is based on these foundations it can hardly fail to prosper.

CHAPTER XVII

THE WORLD AND CHINA

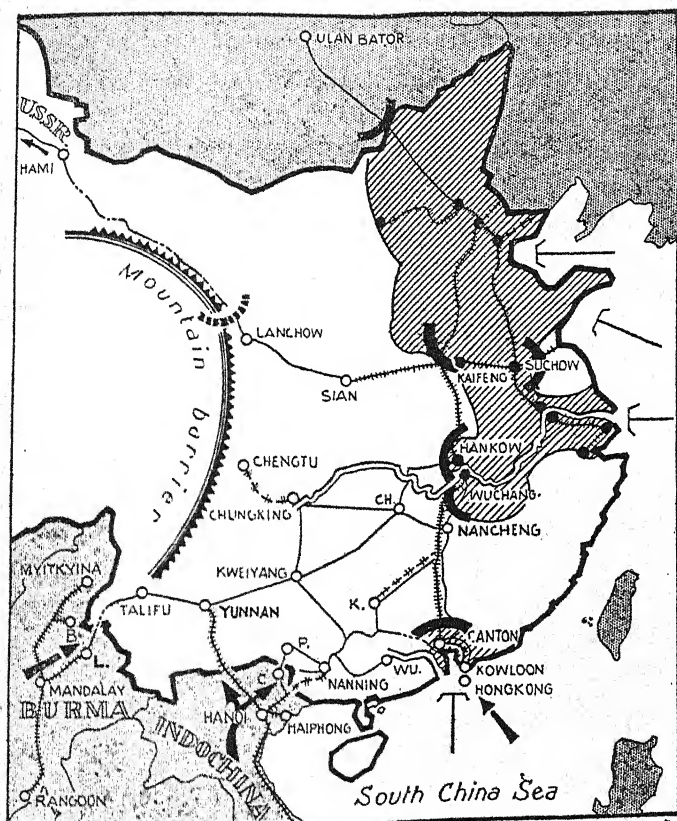
If the war has so far been isolated this does not mean that other nations have no interest in it. At the start, of course, China appealed to the League of Nations; but more as a matter of form than from any real hope of aid. Though her case was sound, she knew that the League itself had been gravely weakened by the Abyssinian crisis and that the European Powers had troubles enough of their own. Public opinion in the United States was, if anything, more cautious and isolationist than it had been during the Manchurian incident. All these doubts proved to be well founded when first the League Council and then the Brussels Conference met to discuss the war and adjourned without having done anything. The League at least passed a resolution urging members to give what aid to China they could individually, but very few obeyed it.

The nation which has helped China most has been Soviet Russia whose interests and sympathies are equally involved in the conflict. She has sent arms and munitions through Outer Mongolia and Sin-

kiang and many aeroplanes. Some of these aeroplanes are flown by Russian pilots and there is no doubt that Russian military advisers also went to Hankow. Besides this official connexion with the Chinese Government, the Soviet continues to maintain independent relations with the Chinese Communists. But Russia's greatest assistance to China has been strategic. Throughout the war Japan has been forced to keep some 300,000 of her best troops in Manchuria in case of a Russian invasion which may never come. As Japanese spokesmen themselves have said, "Japan is fighting China with her left hand". At times, when Japan has been in difficulties in China and sorely tempted to make use of her reserves in Manchuria, it has been enough for the Russian Far Eastern Army to make certain movements near the frontier (probably quite harmless) or for M. Litvinoff to send a stinging Note to the Japanese Government on some minor matter to make them think better of it. The same plan has worked when China, hard pressed in the struggle, has needed a breathing space. The outstanding event in this curious game was the clash between Russian and Japanese troops at Changkufeng on the border between Manchukuo and the Maritime Province of Soviet Russia in July, 1937. No one yet knows whether the Russians occupied this hill (whether or not it was within their own territory) in order to annoy the Japanese, but,

if so, the purpose must have been to divert their energies from the advance on Hankow. In this it was certainly successful and for a short period a Japanese force on the south bank of the Yangtze was actually withdrawn. It is also possible that the incident was timed to coincide with a rising among the Chinese Communists in Manchukuo who were known to be restless and who may possibly have been receiving arms from across the frontier of Outer Mongolia, but the rising never took place on any scale.

Of the other Powers which might have been expected to help China, Britain, France and the United States have all proved disappointing. At first, indeed, they showed a lamentable timidity even when their own interests were directly threatened as in Shanghai. Since the Chinese have shown them that the Japanese are not quite so formidable as they had thought, they have plucked up courage. Their attitude is extremely important to China for all the routes along which she can still import arms and munitions (except the long and difficult road from Russia) pass through British or French territory as may be seen in the accompanying map. Until the fall of Canton the bulk of her supplies came in through Hong Kong whence it was transported on the Canton-Hankow railway. Now that the Canton-Hankow railway has been cut, the main roads into China are through French Indo-China

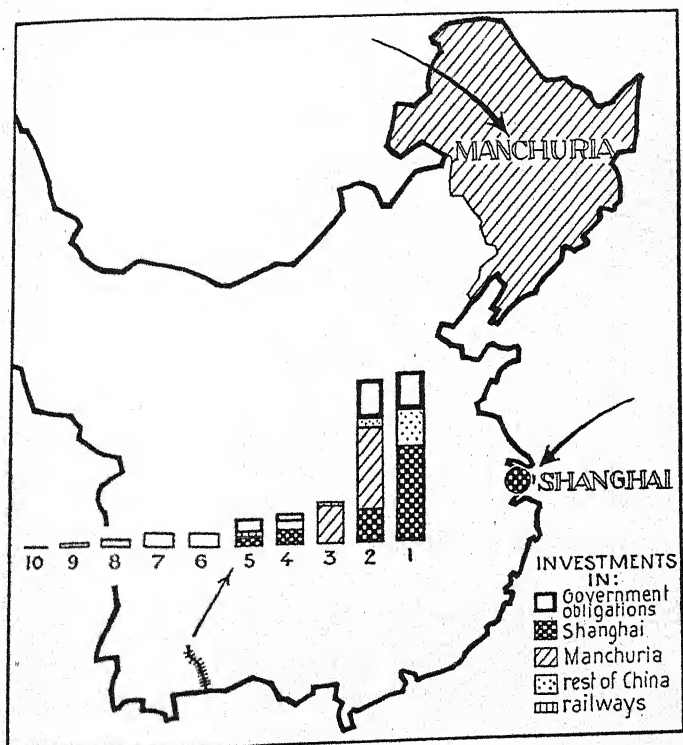


ACCESS TO CHINA (December 1938)

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| War areas | Steamship traffic |
| Traffic cut by war | railways |
| officially closed | " in construction |
| natural access to China | roads |
| " " closed | " in construction |
| " " open | principal occupied towns |
- CH. = CHANGSHA P. = PINGMA WU. = WUCHOW K. = KWEILIN C. = CAOBANG
 B. = BHAMO L. = LASHIO

by the railway to Yunnan and through Burma, from the border of which a new road has been built (but not completed) also leading to Yunnan. France has already given way to Japanese threats, but so long as Britain maintains a policy of neutrality, it is unlikely that the Japanese will be able to cut off China from all her sources of supply. What is more doubtful is whether China will have sufficient means to buy the arms and munitions she needs so badly; for this reason the promise of credits from the United States and British Governments is of the utmost importance.

It is not easy for us who live in Europe to think of events in China and the Far East in the same way as we do of events, let us say, in Spain and Czechoslovakia. We recognise the truth of M. Litvinoff's maxim that peace is indivisible; we feel a genuine sympathy for the Chinese people, a sympathy qualified, perhaps, by the assurance that they are "used to such things". Yet our emotions are, like cousins, "once removed", and we find some comfort in that phrase which only Englishmen could have invented—the Far East. It is neither the old world nor the new world but a third world; it is not only the East but the Far East, remote, unknown and different. But since most of us recognise the weakness of this view it is as well to consider what the war in China means to us and to the world.



24. FOREIGN INVESTMENTS IN CHINA IN 1931 (INCLUDING MANCHURIA)

(as given by Remer)

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|---------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Great Britain | 4 U.S.A. | 7 Belgium | 10 Scandinavian Countries |
| 2 Japan | 5 France | 8 Italy | |
| 3 U.S.S.R. | 6 Germany | 9 Netherlands | |

We may begin by considering our economic interests. On the previous page is a map showing the extent of foreign investments in China in 1931. Altogether over 496 million pounds were then invested in China by foreign countries of which British investments amounted to 244 millions or 49 per cent of the total. Japan accounted for a further 24 per cent followed by the United States and France with 8 per cent each. German investments were then only 4 per cent of the total but have since increased. These figures include Manchukuo where Japan monopolises both the trade and the investments. Rather less than one-third of foreign investments consist of Chinese Government obligations which we have already mentioned in a previous chapter. Needless to say the payment of these loans depends on the existence of a strong and prosperous Chinese Government. The rest of the foreign capital consists of business investments—chiefly foreign trading, manufacturing, real estate, banking and finance, shipping, mining and public utilities. No less than two-thirds of these business investments are invested in Shanghai where Britain alone has some £152 millions. Japan, who is now in virtual possession of Shanghai apart from the International Settlement, has only £44 millions invested there.

On pages 176–177 is a map showing the value of foreign and domestic trade in China in 1936. This also deserves study. Here Britain occupies a less

important position (fourth in order of value) but she is still responsible for 12 per cent of China's total imports. The United States comes first with 20 per cent and Japan and Germany equal second with 16 per cent. In return Britain takes about 9 per cent of China's total exports. In addition British ships handle no less than 40 per cent of the China trade. Roughly two-thirds of this trade is domestic trade, which (as can be seen from the map) is actually more valuable than foreign trade.

It need hardly be said that the continuance of this valuable trade is dependent on peace and prosperity in China. In time of war or civil war trade is largely brought to a standstill as in fact it has been by the Japanese invasion. Equally, foreign investments will be lost unless China once again becomes peaceful and prosperous. It is probable that if China wins the war and remains independent, foreign trade will not only continue but increase, for the new nation will wish to build again what has been destroyed. There will be a demand for manufactured articles, for raw materials, for financial aid. It is possible, of course, that such a new China will insist on receiving her full independence from the Western Powers as well as from the Japanese. Concessions may have to be surrendered, settlements incorporated in the Chinese towns, and the doctrine of extra-territoriality must be brought to an end; but these things have been recognised as inevitable by far-

seeing statesmen for many years. Britain has already surrendered her concession in Hankow and her naval base at Wei hai-wei as part of that policy of gradual retreat which, in the last resort, alone makes the British Empire greater than other empires. We have always recognised that in the long run we cannot rule against the popular will in Ireland, India or China and now, for the first time in history the Chinese people has a will of its own. We shall lose little or nothing by graceful surrender to a resurgent China; we may lose all if we refuse. One may call this policy British hypocrisy, or British wisdom, but it is true.

But what if Japan wins and establishes either complete dominion in China or a series of puppet governments to do her bidding? Here fortunately we need not guess for we have a precedent. When the State of Manchukuo was established in 1932 the new Government declared that it would welcome foreign financial assistance in the development of the country and would maintain the principles of equal opportunity and of the Open Door. It is true that even in 1932 Japanese investments in Manchuria amounted to over 90 per cent of the total of foreign investments but since then the British and American oil companies have been driven out by Oil Monopoly Law of 1934 in spite of protests by the British and American Governments, and other foreign firms, including several German trading companies,

have been forced to follow suit. Imports to Manchukuo from Japan have increased from 37 per cent of the total in 1930 to 73 per cent in 1936; imports from Britain have decreased from 3.5 per cent to 1.1 per cent. Japan monopolises the market for cotton and silk piece goods and also provides practically all metal goods, vehicles, vessels, machinery and tools. It should not be thought that foreigners have been allowed to keep their political privileges while they were deprived of their economic interests: in November, 1937, extra-territorial rights were finally abolished which means, in practice, that Japanese in Manchukuo can do what they like while all other foreigners come under the jurisdiction of the Manchukuo government and courts.

Before the present war began the Japanese showed their lack of concern for the interests of other Powers (as well as for those of China) by their persistent smuggling campaign which naturally hit those foreign firms which still had to pay the customs dues. Since the war began they have done nothing to alter this impression. In the war areas, of course, trade is practically at a standstill but what trade is still carried on is almost entirely in the hands of the Japanese. A certain type of Japanese (usually called "ronin" though gangsters might be a better word) follow the army closely doing what trade they can, mostly in drugs and narcotics. When a city is

captured by the Japanese these ronin gather to reap the harvest while foreign business men are not permitted even to visit their property until months have passed and several diplomatic protests been made. At Shanghai Japanese ships avoid the customs on the excuse that they are carrying military supplies and in this way the iniquitous smuggling campaign goes on. As has been made known in a hundred reports to the Press the Japanese military lose no opportunity of insulting and even assaulting foreigners in Shanghai and elsewhere. Is it likely, then, that foreigners would have anything to gain from a China controlled by Japan ?

In view of these facts the complacency of Mr. Chamberlain and the British Government is unintelligible. Speaking in the House of Commons on November 1, 1938, the Prime Minister said:—

China cannot be developed into a real market without the influx of a great deal of capital, and the fact that so much capital is being destroyed during this war means that even more capital will have to be put into China in the future when the war is over. Who is going to supply the capital ? It is quite certain that it cannot be supplied by Japan. Therefore, when the right hon. gentleman appears to contemplate a future in which Japan will have the monopoly of Chinese trade, and we shall be excluded from it altogether, I say that that is flying in the face of facts.

Such a statement is altogether naïve. It omits the fact that much capital has already been lost. It confuses trade with capital. It suggests (though this

was denied later) that Britain's function is to be to provide money to consolidate Japan's victories. It takes no account of Japanese behaviour in the past or promises for the future. Only a few days before Mr. Chamberlain spoke, Prince Konoe, the Japanese Foreign Minister, had broadcast an address in which he said:—

The nations of the world should also recognise the new situation in the Orient. In the past China has been an area sacrificed to the imperialist ambition of other Powers. Japan recognises the need of making a fundamental change in this situation and wishes to establish a new peace and order in East Asia based on justice. . . . Japan does not reject co-operation with other Powers, neither does she intend to damage the legitimate interests of those Powers. If such nations understand the true intentions of Japan and adopt policies suitable to the new conditions, Japan will not hesitate to co-operate with them. . . .

Who knowing the manner of Japanese diplomatic language can see in this statement anything but a claim to control China? Since then official statements of policy by the Japanese Government have all failed to acknowledge the Nine Power Treaty of Washington and the preamble of the Open Door and instead have refused foreign Powers to "the New Asia" and told them to "grasp its meaning". Nor did Mr. Chamberlain or any of his Ministers mention that the attack on Canton had rendered Hong Kong almost valueless as a naval base, for it is now surrounded by enemy territory

25. CHINA'S DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN
TRADE

(circles represent value)

The calculated total loss of Customs revenue on goods smuggled into North China during 1936 amounted to \$50,000,000 [Principal smuggled goods in 1935 were: cotton, piece goods, artificial silk, sugar, kerosene oil.]

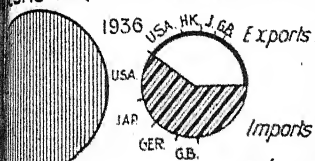
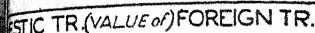
PORTS
Foreign Trade

Foreign Trade

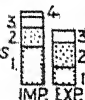
Domestic Trade

Dom. & Foreign.
traffic value
less than 16,000-00
\$ per annum

→ NORTH CHINA
SMUGGLING



Manufactured articles
New materials & semi-man. articles
Food supplies & tobacco
Others



TIENTSIN

CHINWANGTAO

CHEFOO WEIHAWEI

NGTAÓ

CHINKIAN

SHANGHAI

NANKING

variety

CIANG

NINGPO

HANKOW

ICHANG

WANHSEN®

SHASI

1

YO CHOW

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KOWLOON

just as Gibraltar will be if General Franco rules Spain with German and Italian support. And not only strategically valueless but economically dependent on Japanese goodwill. The complacency of the Right as to British interests in China is equalled only by the complacency of the Left who quieten their consciences by saying that "China must win" and that "Time is on her side".

So far I have mentioned only material interests but there are others. There is, for instance, the interest of peace. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria was the first great test of the League of Nations and its first great failure. The present war, a still more naked act of aggression, has once again proved the weakness of our civilisation and encouraged the peoples of the East to despise the peoples of the West as well as to hate them. There can be no peace while Japan marches in China, no international law while Japan ignores treaties. Brutality and hatred in the Far East encourage brutality and hatred in the West, though, God knows, no encouragement is necessary. Peace is indivisible, said M. Litvinoff; let war be universal, say the aggressors. Germany and Italy are bound to Japan by the anti-Communist Pact. They are the Three Musketeers of Power Politics, and no nation may challenge Athos without risking the swords of Porthos and Aramis as well. Japan's success is encouragement to Germany and Italy,

to all men who believe that might is right; Japan's difficulties have done more than anything else to revive the spirit of the democracies and peaceful nations by the thought that at last the virtuous are winning and the wicked being scattered before the Lord. If we descend from the austere heights of first principles, who can deny that the more powerful Japan becomes in the Far East, the weaker Britain, France and Russia must become in Europe? Britain and France must keep a portion of their naval forces in Far Eastern waters while Russia must maintain a vast army in her maritime province.

When all these facts are considered it seems strange that the Western Powers and Britain in particular should have done so little to help China. I do not think that any responsible British Government would have proposed an economic boycott unless it had had the absolute assurance that the United States would support it in case of war. Even then a cautious government might have been excused so long as the situation in Europe remained so critical. It is true that we should almost certainly defeat Japan without great effort within two years, but what would happen during those two years? But there are, after all, other measures short of an economic boycott. Like Soviet Russia we might supply China with arms and military advisers. Better still (for we have few arms to spare) we might

lend China the money to buy arms. The loan is one of the oldest and most efficient weapons in the history of British foreign policy. We might have adopted a stronger attitude towards Japan on many points especially, perhaps, with regard to the Customs. We might still do these things, for with every month the risk grows less. The Japanese, it is true, are bellicose, unreasonable and unduly sensitive to slights, but not even the most patriotic Samurai could pretend that his country was now in a strong position. What a burden on the people of Britain it will be if we must for fifty years maintain a "two-hemisphere" standard in naval armament! If Japan were defeated, it would not be too much to say that one of the greatest of our strategic problems would be solved at once. China is fighting for us by fighting for herself.

These are the urgent practical interests which bind East and West but there are others still. Nearly half way through the twentieth century the nations of the West are no longer so confident of their own superiority. They seek new gods. Science, which alone had made that superiority possible, has turned in our hands, for we have not the understanding and wisdom to use it. Christianity, which gave to Europe at least the common bond of a spiritual form, has been destroyed by materialism, nationalism and reason, for even our virtues are at war lacking the guiding spirit. Christendom

has gone; European civilisation is going. Now, humble in adversity, we may be ready to learn and from whom better than from China where the oldest and most mature of all civilisations is again rising? For hundreds of years when we might have learnt, we would not. The greatest Europeans, Plato, Aristotle, Voltaire, Hume and Kant, knew nothing of Chinese learning and would not have cared if they had known. It was not until the nineteenth century that our æstheticians began to realise that beside the art of China the art of Europe, for all its sweep and vigour, might seem clumsy, indelicate and almost vulgar. It was not until the twentieth century that our thinkers began to wonder whether there might after all be some truth which, escaping the West, had found a home (inadequate, of course) in the East.

It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the world may yet be saved by the East. India and China, throwing off the sloth of centuries, may once again lead the way. But this will be possible only on conditions. One condition is that China should survive as an independent nation capable of self-development. Another is that in this struggle for survival she will not lose her own nature and adopt another. So far in this book I have praised, as one must praise, the way in which China has learnt to build and organise on Western lines. It is obviously good, for instance, that Chinese soldiers

should now be brave and enduring whereas before they were cowardly and ran away. It is more than good, it is necessary. But it is not obviously good that a civilisation in which soldiers were despised and scholars honoured (even if their scholarship had become sterile) should give way to one in which the soldier is honoured and the scholar despised. Patriotism, nationalism, bravery, ruthlessness, energy and organising ability—these, no doubt, are the qualities which alone will save China from Japan, but they are not the qualities which will save civilisation from decay. One must hope that when the struggle is over China may be able to resume her ancient habit. It would be a tragedy if when at last the nations of the West were ready to learn from the nations of the East, they were to find only a reflection of their own features.

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- BETWEEN TWO WARS....."Vigilantes"

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 William
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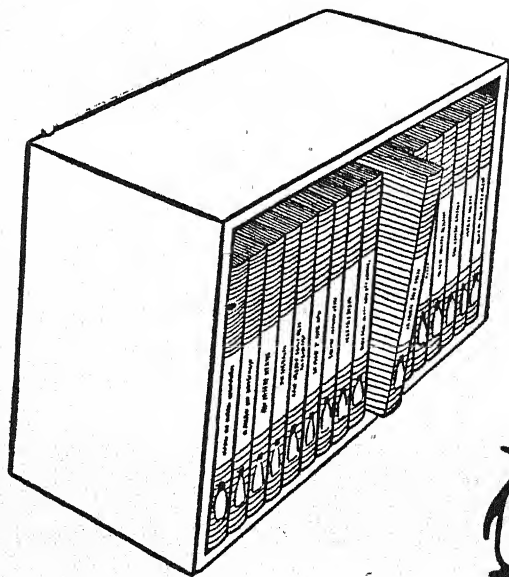
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